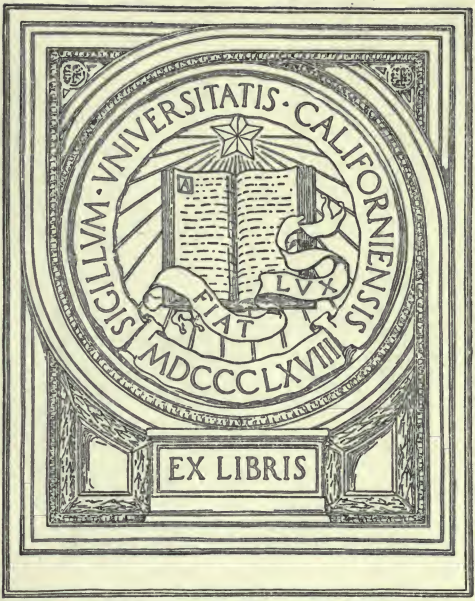
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Mrs HANNAH MORE.

J. HICKERBY, SHERBORN LANE.

MEMOIR

OF

MRS. HANNAH MORE:

WITH

NOTICES OF HER WORKS,

AND

SKETCHES OF HER CONTEMPORARIES.

BY

THOMAS TAYLOR, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF COWPER,"
"MEMOIRS OF BISHOP HEBER," AND OF "JOHN HOWARD
THE PHILANTHROPIST."

"This woman was full of good works, and alms-deeds which she did."
ACTS, ix. 36.

"Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her."
PROVERBS, xxxi. 33.

LONDON:

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LONDON:
JOSEPH RICKERBY, PRINTER,
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TO HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY,

ADELAIDE, THE QUEEN DOWAGER.

MADAM,

When you graciously condescended to honour me with permission to inscribe this work to your Majesty, the recent painful bereavement which you and the British nation have had to mourn over, was, perhaps, little apprehended. Were it not for the disclosures of revelation, events of this trying character would be insupportably painful: but our holy religion, as your Majesty well knows, teaches us that all things, those which seem the most insignificant equally with those which involve consequences of the greatest moment, are under the controul and at the entire disposal of an inscrutable yet unerring and most benevolent Providence. This knowledge, however, does not prohibit us, nor does Christianity forbid us, from letting fall the tear of sorrow over the remains of those

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whom we love; yet it teaches us to sorrow for the dying Christian, not as those who have no hope, but as assuring us that our loss, for such as die in Christ, is their incalculable eternal gain.

I tender to your Majesty my most grateful acknowledgments for kindly consenting to take this work under your patronage.

That your Majesty may enjoy, to a very advanced age, the supporting influence of that religion which, in his last moments, consoled the mind of his late Majesty, of which religion Mrs. More was so bright an example, and so distinguished an advocate; and that you may, at length, after a long life devoted to the patronage and support of the Christian religion, exchange your earthly crown for one that will be eternally unfading, is the earnest desire of

Your Majesty's most faithful,

most devoted, and humble servant,

THOMAS TAYLOR.

PREFACE.

If it be not admitted that Mrs. More was the most popular writer of the past age, it cannot be disputed that she was one of the most useful. Few individuals, in any age, have employed their pen in defending the truths, and elucidating the nature of Christian piety, with happier effect. All her productions were of a popular cast, suited to that numerous class who seek information in a form concise and interesting, and have little taste, and less time, for the perusal of voluminous works.

To this class the Author of these Memoirs has attempted to adapt this volume. He has endeavoured to give a brief, yet complete and faithful detail of Mrs. More's life:—to exhibit the features of her mind, as they are reflected from her own productions; to trace the steady growth of her Christian character, and the progressive development of her Christian principles, till they attained maturity; and to show the happy influence which Christianity had on her mind, prompting her to pursue, with untired perseverance, for a number

of years, amidst the most vexatious hostility, a course of most vigorous effort to benefit the human family.

He has sought to make the volume a family book, which parents may put into the hands of their children with advantage, as an additional instance of the happy results of Christian piety on the mind and conduct of its possessor.

He has collected his materials from all the published and unpublished records of Mrs. More that he could avail himself of; and has made such extracts from her letters as he thought illustrative of her character, and expressive of her opinion on different important points; to which he has added such comments as he thought likely to be instructing and interesting.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.—Page 1.

Opening remarks—Ancestry—Birth—Incidents of childhood—Removal to Bristol—Ardent thirst for improvement—Attack of illness—Early literary taste—Acquaintance with Mr. Turner; its termination—Desire of improvement—Introduction to Garrick; to Johnson—Views of fashionable life—Remarks on mental culture.

CHAPTER II.—Page 18.

Attention to her scholastic duties—Visit to Norfolk—Excursion to Hampshire—Composition of her 'Percy'—Its performance at Drury Lane—Serious attack of illness—Death of Garrick—His funeral—Appearance of her 'Fatal Falsehood'—Her serious impressions—Visit to Oxford—Ramble through Wiltshire and Hants—Commences her 'Sacred Dramas'—Their publication—Her increasing piety—Humbling views she had of herself.

CHAPTER III.—Page 34.

Visit to Bath—Eager pursuit of Christian knowledge—Her Remarks on different writers—Reflections on the loss of a literary friend—Interesting interview with Dr. Johnson—Concern for the abolition of Negro Slavery—Visit to Dr. Kennicott—Increasing seriousness of mind—Commencement of her intimacy with Bishop Porteus—Visit to Dr. Kennicott in his last illness—His death—Remarks on his character—Interesting anecdote respecting him.

CHAPTER IV.—Page 47.

'Bas Bleu'—Revisits London—Increasing dislike to worldly company—Is elected a member of the French Academy of Science—Excursion in Kent—Visit to Oxford—Tour through Somersetshire—Return to Bristol—Benevolent exertions on behalf of Ann Yearsley.

CHAPTER V.—Page 59.

Again visits Mrs. Garrick—Death of Dr. Johnson—Return to Bristol—Purchase of Cowslip Green—Revisits London—Increasing Piety—Christian watchfulness—Remarks on Cowper's Poems—Desires to be useful—Removes to Cowslip Green—Publication of 'Florio,' and 'Bas Bleu'—Revisits Mrs. Garrick—Increasing aversion to worldly company.

CHAPTER VI.—Page 78.

Correspondence with the Rev. John Newton—Composes her poem on 'Slavery'—Work on the 'Manners of the Great'—Effects of retirement—Again visits Mrs. Garrick—Publishes her poem on 'Slavery'—Returns to Cowslip Green—Moral effects of rural scenery—True notions of Christian piety—Again becomes Mrs. Garrick's companion—Increasing seriousness—Interest she took in public affairs—'Bonner's Ghost'—Its origin.

CHAPTER VII.—Page 97.

Excursion through some northern counties—Commences her village labours—Christian liberality of sentiment—Endeavours to instruct the poor—Opposition she met with—Success of her exertions—Again visits London—Publishes her 'Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World'—Its design and merits—Return to Cowslip Green—Continued attention to her schools—Again becomes Mrs. Garrick's companion.

CHAPTER VIII.—Page 117.

Correspondence with the Rev. John Newton—Providential escape from fire—Diligent and persevering attention to her village schools—Jealous inspection of her motives—Extension of her village labours—Concern for the poor—Indisposition—Increasing desire to be useful—Solemn views of her accountability—Success of her exertions.

CHAPTER IX.—Page 136.

Apprehended opposition to her village labours—Indefatigable exertions in her schools—Indisposition and retirement to Bath—Death of Bishop Horne—His character—Illness and death of a young lady—Again visits London—Exertions in behalf of two females—Visits Fulham—'Village Politics'—Reply to Dupont's atheistic speech—Conduct towards her opponents—'Monthly Repository'—Extent of its circulation—Riot among the colliers—Christian conduct and deep concern to be useful.

CHAPTER X.—Page 156.

Continued active endeavours to do good—Religious experience—Persevering attention to her Repository Tracts—Vigilant self-inspection—Unremitting bene-

volent exertions—Sunday labours—Anxiety to avoid giving offence—Retires for relaxation to Bath—Again visits London—Increasing piety—Lord Orford's present of a Bible—Returns to Cowslip Green—Anxiety to relieve the temporal wants of the Poor—Judicious advice to a friend—Concern for her own spiritual welfare.

CHAPTER XI.—Page 176.

Visits London—Death of Lord Orford—Intercourse with the Duchess of Gloucester—Return to Cowslip Green—Attention to her schools—Views of Christian attainment—Retires to Bath—Deep seriousness of mind—Careful self-inspection—Continued active exertions—Indisposition—Ardent piety—Finishes her 'Repository'—Extension of her village labours—Fatigue and need of relaxation—Publishes her 'Strictures on Education'—Its merits—Extensive circulation.

CHAPTER XII.—Page 200.

Opposition made to her village labours—Cause of its origin—Anxiety to conciliate her opponent—His extraordinary conduct—Compelled to break up one of her schools—Deep regret on the occasion—Christian submission—Malice of her enemies—Testimonials to her innocence—Republication of her works—Reasons for the publication—Remarks on the Stage.

CHAPTER XIII.—Page 221.

Takes possession of Barley Wood—Continued opposition of her enemies—Consistent conduct under an attack of illness—Decided piety—Christian watchfulness—Devout gratitude—Searchings of heart—Self-suspicion—Visit to Cheltenham—Efforts to suppress contention—Means to sustain the vigour of piety—Begins writing 'Hints towards forming the Character of a young Princess'—Reasons for composing it—Its publication—Remarks on its merits.

CHAPTER XIV.—Page 247.

Visits several Friends—Correspondence with Alexander Knox—Alarming attack of Illness—Recovery—State of her mind—Commences writing 'Cœlebs'—Design of the work—Its rapid and extensive sale—Brief sketch of its contents—Testimonials to its merits—Letter to a Catholic priest—Composition of 'Practical Piety'—Its publication—Remarks on its contents.

CHAPTER XV.—Page 270.

Tour through Staffordshire and Derbyshire—Commences writing 'Christian Morals'—Motives for composing it—State of mind during the time—Anxiety to be useful—Publication of 'Christian Morals;' its circulation; its merits—Death of her eldest sister—Reflections occasioned thereby—Tour through Hun-

tingdonshire—Frequent indisposition—Commences her 'Essay on St. Paul'—Providential escape from fire—Publication of her 'Essay;' its reception; its merits; its design.

CHAPTER XVI.—Page 291.

Trying bereavements—Serious attack of illness—Declining health of her sisters—Christian submission—Death of an esteemed friend—Efforts to promote subordination, and to relieve the distress of the poor—Death of her sister Sarah—Reflections on the death of her Royal Highness, Princess Charlotte of Wales—Republication of her 'Practical Piety'—Pleasing information of the extensive usefulness of her works—Continued attention to her village labours.

CHAPTER XVII.—Page 312.

Commences writing her 'Moral Sketches'—Motives for composing it—Its publication—Remarks on its merits—On the illustration it affords of her prevailing habits—Patriotism—Concern for the young—Increasing dislike of worldly conformity—Love of sincerity—Union of devotion with active Christian exertion—Aversion to vanity—Death of her only surviving sister—Deep regret for the loss—Reflections—Christian submission—Brief sketch of Mrs. Martha More's character.

CHAPTER XVIII.—Page 335.

Republishes her 'Political Tracts'—Declining health—Tranquil state of mind—Recovery—Tribute to the memory of George the Third—Remarks on Madame Neckar's productions—Definition of religion—Continued desire to be useful—Method of reading the Scriptures—Elected a member of the Royal Society of Literature—Sits for her likeness—Publication of 'Nursery Rhymes'—Views on popular education—Censure of light reading—Opinion of Scott's and Byron's Works—Suffers another dangerous attack—Resignation—Value of religion—Its attainability.

CHAPTER XIX.—Page 357.

Christian sympathy—Love of reading—Efforts to check prevalent public evils—Remarks on the pernicious effects of music and light reading—Accountability for the use of time—Modern poets—Deep piety—Zeal in the cause of missions—Continued benevolent efforts—Barley Wood School at Ceylon—Christian submission—Publication of 'Spirit of Prayer;' its merits—Importance of prayer—Continued interest in her schools—Death of Sir W. Pepys—Annoying visits of strangers.

CHAPTER XX.—Page 380.

Unimpaired mental vigour—Opinion of the Apocrypha—Liberality of sentiments—Interesting interview with Rowland Hill—Jeu d'esprit—Usefulness, and exten-

sive circulation of her works—Slight occasional depression—Solitary musings—Promptitude of conduct—Complaint of interruption—Readiness to assist the needy—Loss of Christian friends—Prodigality of her domestics—Painful results—Removal from Barley Wood.

CHAPTER XXI.—Page 402.

Residence at Clifton—Settlement of her pecuniary affairs—Symptoms of decay—Growing fitness for her great change—Declining health—State of her mind—Lingering affliction—Death—Her funeral—Monumental inscription—Closing remarks—Intellectual powers—Value of her productions—Religious sentiments—Aim of her life—Excellence of her character—Personal appearance—Self denial—Patriotism—Will—Tribute to her memory.

MEMOIR, &c.

CHAPTER I.

Opening remarks—Ancestry—Birth—Incidents of childhood—Removal to Bristol—Ardent thirst for improvement—Attack of illness—Early literary taste—Acquaintance with Mr. Turner—its termination—Desire of improvement—Introduction to Garrick—to Johnson—Views of fashionable life—Remarks on mental culture.

Among those British females whose names deserve to be handed down to posterity, that of Hannah More ranks unquestionably in the highest class. A faithful, concise memoir of a lady so distinguished for her piety and activity in the best of causes, ought certainly to be found in the records of female biography.

Were it true, as some have groundlessly asserted, that Hannah More was of mean extraction, it would be matter of but little importance:—"who boasts his stock," says Feltham pithily, "commands but what's another's." Such, however, is not the case. As to the antiquity of her family, two of her ancestors are said to have been captains in Cromwell's army. At that remote period, and for many generations afterwards, the family inherited

estates of considerable value on the borders of Suffolk and Norfolk. They were then nonconformists both in the male and female branches, and appear to have possessed sterling piety and strong minds.

An unhappy dispute arose respecting the division of the family property at the decease of Hannah More's grandfather, or of one of his brothers. This led to a lawsuit between her father, Jacob More, and his relatives, which unfortunately, and as it subsequently appeared, unjustly, terminated against her father, by which he was deprived of property to a considerable amount.

Jacob More had received a liberal education at a first-rate school in Norwich; and having made great proficiency in his studies, he was designed for the church, most of the family having by that time, for some unknown reason, become episcopalians; but the unhappy termination of the lawsuit occasioned the abandonment of this project, and he eventually became master of a foundation-school near Stapleton. After a short time he married the daughter of a respectable farmer in the neighbourhood, who had received a good education, and possessed a sound, vigorous mind. To her wise council and judicious management, her daughters, of whom she had four, were much indebted for their future success.

Hannah, the subject of this memoir, was the fourth daughter. She was born at Stapleton, in the county of Gloucester, in 1745. From her infancy her talents and her thirst for information were pre-eminent. Her memory was so retentive, that by merely hearing her sisters repeat their lessons, she had acquired considerable knowledge of the French language. To this early knowledge of French she was perhaps indebted for the readiness and elegance with which she spoke it subsequently.

It was Mr. More's wish to give his daughters that education which would qualify them to conduct a respectable boarding-school, by which they might hope comfortably to provide for themselves. Such, however, were his views of the requisite qualifications, that he thought a knowledge of the Greek and Latin classics, and of the mathematics, all of which he was competent to teach, perfectly unnecessary. Hence he discouraged the efforts of Hannah to make these attainments, under the apprehension that they would be injurious rather than beneficial. Nor could he be induced, such was his aversion to female pedantry, to become Hannah's Latin tutor, without considerable reluctance, though urged to it repeatedly by Mrs. More, and by Hannah herself. Her perseverance, however, at length overcame the father's scruples, and Hannah thus attained her object. Pleased with her success, she carefully cultivated an acquaintance with the Latin classics.

Poets are said to be born such, with as much truth probably as many other things are said. But whether Hannah was born a poet or not, it is certain that she had a taste for the muses almost from her cradle. Every slip of paper she could procure, was employed as manuscript for her poetical effusions. Some of these are said to have been of considerable merit. Nor were her early compositions confined to poetry; she wrote essays in prose, which are said have been by no means contemptible. But all these juvenile productions were deposited, not in a secure portfolio, in which case they would probably have formed some pages of her life, but in the very unclassical, dark corner, where the maid kept her dirty brushes, whence they were taken, probably, only to be committed to the flames; a fate which not only the early,

but the entire productions of some writers might have met with, without detriment to the reputation of their authors, and greatly to the benefit of public morals.

About 1757, Mr. More thought it desirable that his eldest daughter, not then twenty years old, should open a boarding-school at Bristol, and Hannah, then in her twelfth year, was placed under her sister's care. It had been the earnest endeavour of Mr. and Mrs. More, not merely to give their daughters a suitable, useful education, but to instil into their minds a reverence for religion, and to show them the importance, not only of possessing pure and elevated sentiments, but of pursuing also discreet and orderly conduct, in order to secure the establishment of a good reputation. These endeavours had not been in vain. From the first opening of the school at Bristol, it was conducted by the elder Miss More with that discretion and propriety, which insured it a measure of success beyond their most sanguine expectations.

Under the care of her sister, Hannah enjoyed great facilities for acquiring information, her thirst for which increased daily. Here she had the use of more books than she had been favoured with in her father's library; the whole of which, except a few select Greek and mathematical works, he had unfortunately lost, owing to the carelessness of the individual to whom they had been entrusted when he removed from Norfolk.

The Spectator, which now for the first time came under her notice, she read with great attention, and considerable benefit. In 1659, the elder Mr. Sheridan delivered his interesting course of lectures on eloquence, at Bristol, on which Miss More's establishment attended. So much was the youthful mind of Hannah delighted on this occasion, that

she composed some excellent laudatory lines, which on being presented to the lecturer, induced him to seek an acquaintance with their author, with whose conversation he was highly pleased.

Shortly after this, Hannah experienced one of those alarming attacks of illness, to which at intervals she had been subject from her infancy, and so continued occasionally to the close of her life. The intelligent Dr. Woodward was the physician consulted on the occasion. In one of his calls, when she had become convalescent, he was so captivated with her conversation, that he entirely forgot the object of his visit till he was quitting the house, when he recollected that he had omitted to inquire after his patient's health, and he had to return to her room for this purpose.

In 1760, Hannah became acquainted with Ferguson, who was then delivering his astronomical lectures at Bristol. The intimacy thus incidentally formed, was mutually interesting, and the friendship lasted through life. Her singular talents were now known, and highly appreciated in the city of Bristol. Among her most intimate friends was Mr. Peach, a linen-draper, who had been the intimate friend of Hume, and had enjoyed to such a degree the confidence of that celebrated historian, that he had committed to his care the correction of his history, then in manuscript. This gentleman possessed a highly cultivated taste, with a mind of unusual grasp, and Hannah always spoke of the benefit she derived from his conversation, in the highest terms of admiration.

To furnish young ladies with suitable pieces to commit to memory, instead of exceptionable extracts from plays, of which the school-books, then extant, almost solely consisted, Hannah published, in 1762, her "Search after Happiness," a pastoral drama. Though she was then only in her seven-

teenth year, the production was skilfully drawn up, and well received.*

Her attacks of indisposition were now so frequent, as to occasion great interruption to her studies; and it was thought desirable, in order to afford her some relaxation, and to recruit her strength, that she should try the benefit of a change of air. For this purpose she repaired for a short time to Weston-Super-Mare, and here her intimacy with the talented and accomplished Dr. Langhorn commenced. This was continued, and an interesting correspondence kept up, till the doctor's unhappy irregularities broke it off.

Having partly recovered her health she returned to Bristol, where she spent the greater part of her time in assisting her sisters in the discharge of their scholastic duties; occasionally, however, visiting some of her literary friends, who had now become rather numerous. She was on terms of intimacy with Dean Tucker and Dr. Ford, besides several individuals of equal eminence. She had free access to all the choicest libraries in and around Bristol, of which she made the best use. To improve her style, and to impart to it that ease, elegance, and vivacity which accorded with her taste, she exercised herself frequently in translating from the Latin, Italian, and Spanish languages, which she now carefully studied. Some of these productions were shown to her friends, and were pronounced by competent judges to be admirably executed, but as they were not to her taste she destroyed them all.

About her twentieth year her intimacy with Dr.

* In a few months it passed through three editions. She subsequently remarked respecting it, in a short preface on its republication with some other works, "It has afforded serious satisfaction to the author to learn, that this little poem has been used in families and schools to supply the place of impure and pernicious publications; and should it be still happily instrumental in promoting a regard to religion and virtue in the minds of young persons, affording them an innocent, and not altogether useless amusement in the exercise of recitation, the end for which it was composed will be fully answered."

Stonehouse, who had relinquished the medical for the clerical profession, and had taken a house not far from Miss More's school commenced. The doctor had been twenty years physician to the infirmary at Northampton, of which excellent charity he was the founder. In 1763 he took orders. He was a zealous, judicious, and eloquent preacher, of truly evangelical sentiments. Some idea may be formed of the high regard Miss More entertained for him by the following eulogistic lines from her pen, written in the fly-leaf of a French copy of Saurin's Sermons, which she had borrowed of the doctor.

" Ces divine ardeurs, cette sainte eloquence,
Ces sublime pensées, ces conceptions immense,
Ces essors évangélique, cette humilité profonde,
Cette connoissance unie a ce mépris du monde ;
Cet horreur du vice, cet amour de la vertu,
Cette extrême soumission a la volonté de Dieu;
Cette heureuse indifférence pour un monde incertain,
Cette compassion pour les moux du genre humain,
Cet amour et cette crainte de l'eternel Créateur,
Cette parfaite espérance dans le sang du Redempteur,
Enfin ces grand idées—ce language divin—
Qui charme, qui éleve, qui transport en Saurin ;
J'admire en le lisant ces beautés éclatantes,
En t'ecoutant, Docteur, les même beautés m'enchantent;
Semblable au prophéte qui, le Saint Ecriture dit,
Laisse a son successeur son manteau et son esprit."

These lines have been thus translated: —

" That warmth divine, that holy eloquence,
Those thoughts sublime, conceptions so immense,
That holy zeal, that deep humility,
Extent of knowledge, perfect charity ;
That *dread* of vice, of virtue such a love,
That true submission to the will above;
That calm indifference on this changing scene,
That pity for the woes of mortal man ;
That love and fear of the eternal Good,
That perfect hope on the Redeemer's blood,
Those grand ideas, language so divine,
Which charm, exalt, transport us in Saurin ;
In reading *him* these beauties still appear,
In hearing *thee* those beauties charm *mine ear ;*
Like to that prophet who, as Scriptures say,
His cloak and spirit left, then wing'd to heaven his way !"

That a young lady of Miss More's accomplish-

ments, though she possessed but little property, should have had her admirers of the other sex, and among the wealthy too, was not matter of surprise. Accordingly we find, that in her twenty-first year she received a matrimonial offer from Mr. Turner, of Belmont-house, not far from Bristol—a gentleman of fortune, of a literary and cultivated taste, but nearly twice her age; and, as it appears, of unsettled, if not of eccentric habits. The following circumstances led to the intimacy. Two young ladies, Mr. Turner's nieces, were under the care of the Misses More. Mr. Turner had kindly requested them always to spend their holidays at Belmont-house, and to invite any young ladies they might wish as companions. Of this permission they gladly availed themselves, and on one occasion, as they knew that the Miss Mores would be pleased with a visit to their uncle's, they invited the two younger sisters, Hannah and Patty. So much was Mr. Turner delighted with the conversation of Miss Hannah, that he made her an offer of marriage, which, after due consideration, she thought proper to accept. The wedding-day was fixed, but when it had nearly approached, Mr. Turner deferred it. It was again fixed, on each occasion by himself, but he again, on the eve of its arrival, put it off. The elder sisters now interfered, as such conduct appeared dishonourable. Still Mr. Turner maintained that his attachment was unaltered, and wished again to name a day. Hannah evinced no petulant resentment, but firmly requested time to reconsider the matter. In this emergency she wisely consulted Dr. Stonehouse, and at his recommendation she calmly, but firmly, refused the alliance. The parting interview was friendly. Mr. Turner previously offered to settle on her an annuity for life, as a compensation, which she nobly declined to accept. That Mr. Turner's intentions were honourable there cannot

be a doubt: he considered himself certain of his prize, as he subsequently acknowledged; and his attachment was evidently sincere, as he could not rest satisfied without settling upon her, which he did, through her friend Dr. Stonehouse, without her knowledge, the annuity she declined to accept. He often spoke of her afterwards, always with admiration, and at his death he left her one thousand pounds.

Different individuals will view the result as a subject of regret, or otherwise, as their opinion of the case may happen to vary. Perhaps the separation, though it must have been painful to both individuals, was the wisest course; as it can hardly be imagined that a lady of Miss More's spirit, could have been really happy with an individual so irresolute and fickle. That he was censurable for dallying with her feelings cannot be denied. Even when a gentleman's intentions are honourable, it is highly improper, under any pretence, to trifle with a female in this delicate affair. Deliberately to deceive one is a disgrace to any man, and a crime of the deepest dye.

It would, perhaps, have been better had Miss More resisted the offer, when first made, with the same firmness with which she resisted it afterwards; as unequal matches seldom prove the means of happiness on either side. But taking all the circumstances into consideration,—the idea of being associated with a gentleman of great wealth, who kept his carriage; of considerable personal accomplishments; of respectable literary attainments; of being mistress of a house elegantly furnished, delightfully situated, surrounded by an estate most tastefully laid out—was too much to expect from a lady so circumstanced. It was not without considerable emotion that Miss More summoned up courage to resist the offer at last; nor did even the dignity of her

mind enable her to do it but at the expense of much feeling. The resolution which she appears to have coupled with this determination, never more to form a similar engagement, to which she rigidly adhered through life, was unjustifiable; evincing a degree of self-command, less directed by those amiable feelings which form a prime constituent in female excellence, than can be held up to imitation.

No sooner was this affair settled, than Miss More returned with redoubled zeal to her literary pursuits. Her connexions became increasingly numerous; and her reputation, as a lady of most promising talent, was extensively known. This afforded her facilities for an introduction to some of the first writers of the age; a gratification which she was extremely anxious to enjoy. Her zeal, though in her case it was not attended with any ill effects, owing to her singular firmness of mind and uniform decorum, yet led her to the pursuit of a course not seldom ruinous to all moral feeling. Being passionately desirous to see Garrick perform some of Shakspeare's plays, she became a frequent attendant at the theatre, on her visits to the metropolis, which were now rather frequent. That her conduct was commendable in this respect, none but those who are fascinated with these puerilities will assert. Her escape from the morally impure atmosphere, uninfected and uninjured, must never encourage others to pursue the same course; for to one that passes through these scenes of vice unhurt, thousands are ruined by them for ever. A course that is morally evil, or only likely to be so in its effects, though genius and literature may lavishly shower around it all their enchantments, ought never to be pursued.

Miss More's enthusiastic love of poetic genius, prompted her, in one of her excursions around London, to visit Twickenham, the village where Pope

formerly resided; "her tuneful Alexander and beloved bard," as she called him. She had regarded this as almost a sacred spot, and had often, as she says, "created to herself an imaginary Themis," but she found little that was worthy of admiration in the house, the garden, or the grotto. Her conjecture that Pope's motive for preferring interment in the humble church of Twickenham, to the splendid mausoleum of Westminster Abbey, was the same as had induced Cæsar to say, he had rather be the first man in a village, than the last at Rome, was classical and ingenious, if not true.

Miss More now returned to Bristol to assist in the management of her sister's flourishing and excellent establishment. Her love of literature, however, continued unabated; and she neglected no means of mental culture within her reach. With Dr. Stonehouse she continued on terms of the closest intimacy, and from his conversation and advice she derived the greatest benefit.* In the same year she again visited London, accompanied by two of her sisters. On this occasion the desire she had long felt to be introduced to Dr. Johnson, was gratified. On her previous visit to town, she had, in a letter to a friend who was equally the friend of

* In 1773, at the request of Dr. Stonehouse and others, she composed the following poetic tribute to the virtues of Samuel Love, M. A., Fellow of Baliol College, Oxford, who died that year, at the early age of twenty-nine. The lines were inscribed on a monument, erected by subscription, in Bristol cathedral:—

"When worthless grandeur fills the embellished urn,
No poignant grief attends the sable bier;
But when distinguished excellence we mourn,
Deep is the sorrow, genuine is the tear.

Stranger! shouldst thou approach this awful shrine,
The merits of the honoured dead to seek,
The friend, the son, the Christian, the divine,
Let those who knew him, those who loved him, speak.

O, let them in some pause of anguish say,
What zeal inflamed, what faith enlarged his heart;
How glad the unfettered spirit winged its way,
From earth to heaven, from blessing to be blest."

Garrick, given an interesting description of her feelings on seeing that tragedian perform in the character of Lear. This letter was shown to Garrick, who was so delighted with it, that he expressed a desire to be introduced to the writer. Shortly after her arrival in town, the introduction accordingly took place, to the gratification of both parties. Garrick now in his turn introduced his new acquaintance to all his literary friends, and among others to Dr. Johnson. The interview between the herculean doctor and his fair admirer was mutually pleasing. The doctor was in one of his best moods, and received her courteously, accosting her with a verse from a morning hymn she had written at the request of Sir James Stonehouse. The conversation was interesting, and they parted mutually gratified with the visit. Miss More was now almost a daily visitor at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where she enjoyed frequent intercourse with the most distinguished literati of the day. On one occasion she had the pleasure to be introduced to Barrette and Burke. Coming thus often into contact with minds of this high order, could not fail to be beneficial to one whose thirst after knowledge was intense, and whose capabilities for attaining it were seldom equalled.

After remaining six weeks in town she again returned to Bristol, to pursue her unambitious but most useful career. Her next visit to the metropolis was in February, 1775. She continued there on this occasion about the same time, visiting chiefly at Hampton and at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where she enjoyed frequently the company of Garrick and Johnson, besides many other literary characters. Among these were Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Carter, and Mrs. Boscawen. No society could have been more congenial to her taste, or more conducive to her mental culture, and few individuals could have more diligently improved it. She had penetration to dis-

cover the marked features of each individual's mind with whom she came in contact, and could distinguish with ease and accuracy their nice and delicate shades of variation; pointing out what was peculiar to each, and what was common to all, a talent, without which but little benefit will be derived from intercourse with minds the most refined and cultivated. The study of character is as essential as the study of books.

The facilities enjoyed by Miss More for pursuing her literary predilection, and acquiring a correct and pure taste, were most auspicious, and must have far exceeded the most sanguine expectation she could ever have formed. She was now fairly introduced to the first literary circles, and was received by all with cordiality and esteem. Nor did the frivolities of fashionable life, pernicious as their influence often is, impair the vigour of her moral feelings. Though she was not then decidedly pious, yet the habits of virtue in which she had been trained, the veneration in which she held the Scriptures, the importance she attached to external religious worship, the self-command which she always possessed, her reverence for the Sabbath, and the correctness of her deportment, under all circumstances, preserved her, through the Divine blessing, from being dazzled and ensnared by the fascinating scenes she beheld. Even at this period she saw through the flimsy veil in which vice always seeks to conceal herself.

The scenes of amusement which afforded gratification to her friends, and to which they conducted her, from the kindest motives, proved to her annoying and vexatious. Coming from the opera, she exclaimed,

> "Bear me, O God, O quickly bear me hence,
> To wholesome solitude, the nurse of sense."

Though her heart does not appear then to have

been touched by Divine grace, nor her mind sufficiently enlightened to discover the important claims which the realities of eternity had upon her attention, yet she felt enough of their importance to make her see the folly of listening, for hours, to sounds which could only divert the mind's attention from nobler pursuits. Hence she resolved, with her characteristic firmness, never again to visit the opera. In allusion to the lines above quoted she says, "This apostrophe broke from me in coming from the opera, the first time I ever went, and the last time I shall ever go."

Pleased as Miss More's Bristol friends were with the very flattering reception she had met with in the metropolitan literary circles, yet were they not without many apprehensions that it would diminish, if it did not destroy, the devout regard she had always paid to religion. Hearing that she had attended some Sunday parties, her excellent and kind friend, Dr. Stonehouse, wrote her an affectionate letter on the subject. This most Christian conduct of the worthy doctor was highly commendable, and is well worthy of imitation, though in her case it did not appear to have been needed. Adverting to it, in one of her letters to her sisters, she says, "Thank my dear Dr. S—— for his kind seasonable admonitions on my last Sunday's engagement. Conscience had done its office before, nay, was busy at the time; and if it did not dash the cup of pleasure to the ground, infused at least a tincture of wormwood into it. I did think of the alarming call, 'What dost thou here?'"

For fashionable display and fashionable diversions, she felt an increasing dislike. Nor could she be induced to comply with the former, or follow the latter, only so far as she hoped thereby to enrich her mind. She never appears to have been unmindful how utterly incapable these things were to make their vota-

ries truly happy. "The more I see of the honoured, the proud, and the great," she writes, "the more I see of the littleness and the unsatisfactoriness of all created good, and that no earthly good can fill up the desires of the immortal principle within." Many will probably, as she hints, think this to be the dark side of the picture, but, as she well adds, "It is, nevertheless, the right side, and the one that shows things as they really are."

In June of this year, 1775, Miss More composed and published her legendary tale, 'Sir Eldred of the Bower,' with the addition of a small poem she had by her, previously written, entitled 'The Bleeding Rock.' She was little more than a fortnight from the time the idea of 'Sir Eldred' had occurred to her mind, in composing the tale. She forwarded the MS. to Mr. Cadell, requesting he would give her what he thought it was worth. The sum he offered her far exceeded her expectations, but in addition to it, he generously assured her that if she could ascertain what Goldsmith received for his 'Deserted Village,' and if the amount he offered her fell short of that sum, he would make it up. The bookseller and Miss More were then entirely unknown to each other, though they were natives of the same village. In all her subsequent publications, Miss More experienced the same generosity from Mr. Cadell, and the connexion thus formed, existed through life, not only with unabated, but with increased mutual esteem and regard.

The merits of this publication fully sustained Miss More's reputation. She received letters from individuals of the first-rate talent, speaking in the highest terms of its excellence. It was for days the chief subject of conversation among the literary circles in town. Garrick, and Johnson, and Burke, and Mrs. Montagu, with many others, spoke in its praise. All were persuaded that it was only the first-fruits of an abundant harvest.

Early in 1776, Miss More again visited London, where she remained much longer than on any former occasion, not returning till the following June. Admired as she had been before, she was much more so now, and all her friends were anxious to congratulate her on the success of her publication. She now enjoyed frequent interviews with Dr. Johnson, and with nearly all the literati of the day. Her situation was indeed most favourable to improvement, which she still sought with the utmost eagerness. "Would you believe it?" she writes, "that in the midst of the pomps and vanities of this wicked town, that I have taken it into my head to study like a dragon; I read four or five hours every day, and wrote ten hours yesterday. How long this will last I do not know, but I fear no longer than the bad weather."

It was, however, far more for its literary advantages than because it was the means of introducing her into the highest circles of fashion, that Miss More preferred a residence in town. Her object in so frequently visiting the metropolis was entirely dissimilar to that which ladies have generally in view. To conform to the fashionable follies of the day, so as not to appear singular, was one of her greatest annoyances. Her remarks on a mere fashionable life were most severe. Mental attainments were almost solely the objects of her pursuit, and she had an increasing dislike to everything that diverted her attention from this favourite study. It was this and this only, that led her, when she was in town, to be a constant attendant at Drury-lane every night when Garrick appeared. And as that consummate actor had about that time determined very soon to retire from the stage, she lost no opportunity of being present when he performed; and saw him act, for the last time, his several different characters, each time with increasing admiration; and her letters at this period consist

almost entirely of descriptions of his powers, and of her feelings on witnessing them, drawn up, though evidently in haste, yet with great force and beauty.

Purity of taste is an object of great importance to all who make the least literary pretensions; it is more especially so to those who write, or who intend to write for the public, and ought by such to be most assiduously cultivated. A slovenly writer, be his thoughts ever so excellent, deserves censure. That the attainment of an easy, chaste, yet perspicuous and animated style, was regarded by Miss More in its just light, there cannot be a doubt; but that the course she pursued to acquire it was the wisest she could have taken, even had it been the safest, instead of being the most dangerous, perhaps none will contend. The experiment she made was one of great risk and peril; but owing to the native vigour of her mind, to the sound, biblical, and moral instruction she had early received, and above all, to the care of a kind Providence, she happily escaped from the snares of vice—we will not say unhurt, for the most pure can hardly fail to receive some degree of evil from scenes of this description. Let none, therefore, venture to take the same course in hope of similar success. There was no occasion, even in her day, to have resorted to theatrical exhibitions for the cultivation of genius: far less occasion is there now. Happy is it for us and for our children, that the best and purest writers are now to be found on the side of virtue and religion. Men of the greatest genius and of the most cultivated taste, some dead and many living, have not only nobly defended the ramparts, but have employed their talents in describing the essential features of that holy religion, in the elucidation of which Miss More subsequently wrote her best productions.

CHAPTER II.

Attention to her scholastic duties—Visit to Norfolk—Excursion to Hampshire—Composition of her 'Percy'—Its performance at Drury Lane—Serious attack of illness—Death of Garrick—His funeral—Appearance of her 'Fatal Falsehood'—Her serious impressions—Visit to Oxford—Ramble through Wiltshire and Hants—Commences her 'Sacred Dramas'—Their publication—Her increasing piety—Humbling views she had of herself.

After a residence of nearly six months in London, in the enjoyment of every advantage for mental culture, associated with individuals of the purest taste, few could have returned perfectly contented, as did Miss More, to the school establishment at Bristol; but neither the attractive scenes she had beheld, nor the applause she had received, had in any degree impaired the native simplicity of her mind. All her friends were delighted to perceive that she had escaped from every entanglement uninjured. She continued at Bristol during the remaining part of 1776, and in the ensuing year she visited her relatives in Suffolk and Norfolk, performing a tour of considerable extent through the borders of these counties. On this occasion she visited Norwich and most of the towns, with almost every gentleman's seat of any celebrity in the vicinity. In her tour she complied with a pressing invitation from Mrs. Barbauld, to pay her a visit, and with this talented lady she spent a day or two most pleasantly.

From Norfolk, Miss More proceeded to London, some time in July, where she spent some weeks, chiefly at Garrick's, whom she accompanied in his almost daily visits to the nobility and gentry in and around the metropolis. He had the penetration to discover that she possessed talents of the highest order, and hence was pleased to introduce her to circles where they would be duly appreciated. On one occasion they made a hasty excursion into Hampshire, to Farnborough Place, the seat of Mr. Wilmot, where they met a large and splendid party. The intimacy thus commenced between the Wilmot family and Miss More was a source of comfort to both parties, and continued unimpaired through life.

Towards the end of August, after an absence of near five months, most pleasantly spent, Miss More returned to Bristol. In November she again visited London. Her object on this occasion was chiefly to give the finishing touch, under the advice of Garrick, to a tragedy she had been for some time composing, entitled 'Percy.' Harris, the manager at Drury-lane, had agreed to give it a trial, and when finished, it was performed under Garrick's superintendance. Its success was most flattering, and far exceeded the most sanguine expectations of both the author and her friends. It was, however, a production of uncommon merit. Every one was warm in its praise. The house received it with shouts of applause; it was performed six nights successively, and six more, within a very short time, always to crowded houses. Four thousand copies of the first edition were speedily sold off. A profusion of congratulations were poured in upon her on this occasion, by literary characters of the first eminence. One writes, "When you see the fair author, crown her, cover her, hide her with laurels; and when I see her I will scatter flowers before her." The Duke of Northumberland and Earl Percy thanked her for

the honour it had done them. "I have only to wish you health," wrote Mrs. Montagu, "to wear your bays with pleasure, and that you may ever be as you have been, the pride of your friends and the humiliation of your enemies." From Mrs. Boscawen she received a most ingeniously formed wreath of laurel, with an affectionate laudatory letter.

About this time Miss More suffered much from an attack of illness, which confined her to her room for some weeks. As soon as she was able to be removed she accepted a pressing invitation from the Garricks to pay them a visit at Hampton. At this charming retreat she remained till the spring of 1778, employing herself, as her health would permit, in literary pursuits, and mixing less frequently than before with the beau monde. Her affliction had evidently excited in her mind a greater dislike to mere worldly pursuits than she had before experienced. Her reading was at this time of a different kind to what it had before been. The books she now consulted, showed that a deep impression had been made on her mind as to the importance of divine things. The Bible, which indeed she never appears to have wholly laid aside, she now read constantly. "Three times," says she, "have I read through the epistles since I have been here." Nor was her reading solely confined to the Scriptures; she consulted the works of several eminent commentators, but as they were more critical than evangelical, they were not likely to discover to her the glory of the gospel. Of West on the Resurrection, she speaks in the highest terms, commending it as an excellent work, calculated to confound the cavils of the infidel, and to confirm the hopes of the believer.

The impression thus made on Miss More's mind was deepened by the decease, during this year, of some of her most intimate friends. One, whose loss she severely deplored, was Sarah, the second wife of

her friend Dr. Stonehouse. She died in 1788, at the age of fifty-five, and Miss More composed the following lines on the occasion :—

"Come resignation! wipe the human tear
Domestic anguish drops o'er virtue's bier;
Bid selfish sorrow hush the fond complaint,
Nor from the God she loved detain the saint.
Truth, meekness, patience, honoured shade! were thine,
And holy hope and charity divine:
Though these thy forfeit being could not save,
Thy faith subdued the terrors of the grave.
Oh! if thy living excellence could teach,
Death has a loftier emphasis of speech;
Let death thy strongest lesson then impart,
And write PREPARE TO DIE, on every heart."

During this year the Rev. Thomas Hunter, M.A., vicar of Feversham, with whom she had been intimate, who had written an able work against Lord Bolingbroke's philosophy, died; and at the earnest request of his son, Miss More composed for him the following epitaph :—

"Go, happy spirit, seek that blissful land,
Where zealous Michael leads the glorious band
Of those who fought for truth; blest spirit, go,
And perfect all the good begun below:
Go hear applauding saints delighted tell,
How vanquished falsehood at thy bidding fell.
Blest in that heaven, whose paths thy virtues sought;
Blest in that God, whose cause thou well hast fought;
O, let thy honoured shade his care approve,
Who this memorial reads of filial love;
A son whose father living was his pride,
A son who mourns that such a father died."

These compositions, with the events that accompanied them, were as mementoes to her of the instability of everything earthly, and served not only to perpetuate, but to render more indelible, the serious impressions recently made on her mind by her affliction. By all who watch the movements of God in his dealings with the heart, they will be regarded as proofs of his gracious intentions towards her; but the impression on Miss More's mind, though it thus became more permanently fixed, was nevertheless not yet sufficiently powerful to divert her attention

entirely from the tragic muse. Or if it was, she had not the courage to avow it, and to refuse the importunity of Garrick and her friends, who pressed her to make a second attempt. Encouraged by her former success, she commenced her tragedy, entitled 'Fatal Falsehood,' four acts of which she composed during her continuance at Garrick's, with which he was much pleased. She completed it at Bristol, whither she repaired in April 1778, having then become convalescent.

In the following winter she suffered another rather severe attack of illness; and in January, 1779, before she had recovered, she was summoned to London by Mrs. Garrick, to mourn with her for the death of Garrick, who had expired after a short illness, on the 20th January, while on a visit at Lord Spencer's. Such was her esteem for the deceased, and her attachment to the bereaved wife, that she instantly, at the risk of her health, and almost of her life, complied with the invitation. She found Mrs. Garrick at the house of a friend, whither she had been kindly invited to stay while the funeral preparations were making.

It is probable that the sorrow she experienced on this occasion was much augmented by the distressing uncertainty, which she could not but feel, as to the deceased's preparedness for the solemn event. Correct as she knew him to have been in his usual deportment—and she bore this testimony to his memory "that she never witnessed in any family more decorum, propriety, and regularity than in his,"—yet she could not but have been apprehensive that far too little attention had been paid by him, in his habitual conduct, to the great concerns of religion. Her mind was sufficiently enlightened to know, that the maintenance of that external piety, which the world accounts sufficient to secure its possessor's eternal interests, often lulls the conscience into dan-

gerous and fatal security, while there is no solid hope on which it can rest.

That Garrick was a man of distinguished talent it would be ridiculous to deny; but that his talents were more showy than solid, more dazzling than useful, is unquestionable. Perhaps few, possessed of such capabilities, have employed them to so little really good purpose. His conversational powers, and the inexhaustible fund of his wit, have seldom been equalled—never surpassed. But were they employed on the side of virtue, or in any way the least likely to serve its interests? Were they not, on the contrary, often exerted to create a smile at its expense? Was it not his object to amuse, more than to benefit, the individuals with whom he associated? Was not the moral influence of his conversation, taking the most charitable view of it we can, pernicious, rather than otherwise? Looking at talent in the light in which Christianity presents it to our view, we find it increases its possessor's responsibility, according to the measure of it he may enjoy: "where much is given, of him will much be required." What we possess, either of natural or acquired endowments, was given us for the use of others, as well as ourselves. It is irrational to suppose that talent is not misapplied, when used almost solely, either for our own or for others' amusement. That such was the use to which Garrick devoted his life is undeniable. One cannot help regretting that an individual with such powers should have spent all his life on such trifles. Had he employed his pen in the production of some work of genius, for which he was not incapable, he might have lived to some purpose. It will, perhaps, be said, that though he did not avowedly serve the interests of piety, yet he did it indirectly, by exposing the hollow pretensions of its professed friends. But it may be doubted whether individuals, who are not themselves decidedly pious, can do this

to any useful purpose. Such attempts to expose hypocrisy have a much more powerful tendency to degrade piety, and to encourage the vicious in their follies, than to check vice. The friendship of the world is enmity against God. " He that is not with me," saith the Redeemer, " is against me." It is not enough that we cease to do evil, we must also learn to do well. In the light of the Scriptures he is an unprofitable servant, be his moral conduct ever so consistent, who spends his talents to no useful purpose.

It has already been shown, that Miss More's attachment to fashionable life had never been strong. She had been led into it by her love of literature; and so far as it had promoted that object, it had afforded her satisfaction. But her affliction in London, previous to Garrick's death, with the attack of illness she had experienced on her return to Bristol, followed up by the unexpected and very sudden death of one who formed almost the only tie that held her in connexion with worldly gaiety, made a very considerable alteration in her mind; and though her conduct was not immediately very different to what it had been, yet from that time she sought more carefully to sever herself gradually from all her worldly connexions; an object which she subsequently, through the grace of God, was happily able to effect.

Anxious to witness the interment of him whom she had so much admired, she went with Miss Cardogan to Westminster Abbey. The funeral was conducted with great pomp. Sheridan was chief-mourner, and ten noblemen were pall-bearers. The scene was most affecting. A deep solemnity seemed to pervade the hearts of all, while " the whole choir sang," as she says, " in streams only less sublime than will be the archangel's trump, Handel's fine anthem." The eyes of all were suffused

with tears, while the solemn funeral service was being read. With a large majority of the spectators this was only the involuntary tear which nature lets fall on such occasions: all that they had felt was forgotten as a dream, immediately they withdrew from the place, and they participated in the gay diversions of the evening of the same day, as if nothing had occurred. It was far different with herself. The serious impressions previously made on her mind were still further deepened, and her attachment to the world still further diminished. She quitted the scene, seriously reflecting on the vast importance of duly preparing for the same great change which the deceased had undergone.

Miss More remained in London with Mrs. Garrick for several months. But though she was still on terms of close intimacy with many ladies of rank, and with all the most talented authors in and around the metropolis, yet so much had her love of retirement increased, that she could seldom be persuaded to mix with the gay circles. On occasions when she was induced to do so, it was either to avoid giving offence to some kind friend; or when she could find no plausible excuse, except a positive refusal. A deep sense of the value of time, and of her responsibility for its improvement, seemed to rest upon her mind. To morning visits she was exceedingly averse, accounting them, as she says, "almost an immorality." She read closely for several hours daily, and the works she selected were chiefly theological.

During the spring of 1779 her tragedy, entitled 'Fatal Falsehood,' was performed at Drury-lane; and though the season for bringing it out was ill chosen, as many of the first players had left the town, yet it was received with great applause, and had a run but little inferior to its predecessor. Its merits were highly applauded by the first-rate critics,

and taking all circumstances into consideration, its success far exceeded the expectation of her friends. As to herself, she felt little interested in its fate: her attention was gradually becoming more intensely fixed on objects of far more importance.

Miss More returned to Bristol in June, 1779, where she remained several months, quietly devoting the greater part of her time to reading and study. Her anxiety for biblical and theological knowledge was evidently increasing. In the December following she paid Mrs. Garrick another visit. They spent the winter chiefly at Hampton, in almost perfect solitude. Yet, she says, "I am never dull, not being reduced to the fatigue of entertaining dunces, or of being obliged to listen to them." A remark which she probably made, not so much in reference to juvenile pupils, though, in frequent cases, that is sufficiently tedious, as to the insipid conversation and inexcusable ignorance of many respectable adults.

As the spring of 1780 advanced, she accompanied Mrs. Garrick in some occasional journeys to London, to visit a few select literary friends. She spent an evening very agreeably with Johnson, at Miss Reynolds's. The doctor's health was enfeebled, but his mind was in full vigour, and, with all his characteristic love of moral consistency, he severely reprimanded her for flippantly quoting some passage in Tom Jones, seizing the occasion to denounce indignantly the whole of Fielding's works as pernicious and dangerous.

In one of Mrs. Garrick's visits to London, about this time, she persuaded Miss More to accompany her to an assembly. The company, though large, was select and highly respectable, yet it afforded her no amusement; she greatly preferred the same number of hours spent in retirement and study, or in conversation with a choice friend or two, with minds akin to her own. Hence she preferred the calm delightful quiet of Hampton, to any town residence,

though, on account of the sad reminiscences it awakened, it was somewhat melancholy.

In April, 1780, Miss More complied with an invitation from Dr. Kennicot, to pay him a visit at Oxford. Through him she was introduced to many excellent and learned members of the university. The most distinguished of these was Dr. Horne, then president of Magdalen College, and afterwards Bishop of London, with whom a correspondence, delightful to both parties, was kept up during the remainder of life.

From Oxford she proceeded to Bristol, early in May, and there remained till near the close of the year, when she again became Mrs. Garrick's companion for some months, residing, as before, chiefly at Hampton. Her diligent attention to her literary pursuits was unabated. She devoted many hours daily to reading and writing, allowing no part of her time, on which she set the highest value, to be unoccupied.

A deep sense of the value of time pervaded her mind, and she composed, about this period, for her own use, the following soliloquy:

Soft slumbers now mine eyes forsake;
My powers are all renew'd;
May my freed spirit too awake,
With heavenly strength endued!

Thou silent murderer, SLOTH, no more
My mind imprisoned keep;
Nor let me waste another hour
With thee, thou felon, SLEEP.

Hark, O my soul, could dying men
One lavished hour retrieve,
Though spent in tears and pass'd in pain,
What treasures would they give!

But seas of pearl and mines of gold,
Were offered them in vain
Their pearl of countless price is lost; *
And where's the promis'd gain?

Lord, when thy day of dread account
For squander'd hours shall come,
Oh, let them not increase th' amount,
And swell the former sum!

* Matthew xiii. 46.

Teach me in health each good to prize,
I, dying, shall esteem;
And every pleasure to despise,
I then shall worthless deem.

For all thy wondrous mercies past,
My grateful voice I raise,
While thus I quit the bed of rest,
Creation's Lord to praise.

At the earnest entreaties of some friends, to whom these lines had been shewn, Miss More consented to their publication some time afterwards, when she prefixed to them the following remarks: "As early rising is conducive to health, and to the improvement of the mind in knowledge and piety, this soliloquy is designed to promote in young people, to whom it is more particularly recommended, so commendable a habit, which, if contracted in early life, is the less liable to be departed from in riper years."

Literary attainments were now regarded by her in their true light, not as a personal embellishment, to be cultivated solely for its possessor's individual benefit, but as a talent, for the right use of which she was responsible, and would have to render up an account at the last day.

To avoid the bustle of the election at Bristol, as party spirit there ran very high, she went for a short tour through the counties of Wiltshire and Hants. She greatly enjoyed the excursion, and on her return applied herself with renewed vigour to her studies. She preferred the Bible to all other books; it was her daily companion, a lamp unto her feet and a light to her path; the more she studied it, the more it became endeared to her. She had commenced the composition of her 'Sacred Dramas,' an employment which afforded her the greatest pleasure. Her pursuits were still literary, but she now decidedly preferred sacred to profane literature.

In December, 1780, she again visited Mrs. Garrick, and, as in the preceding winters, passed the time chiefly at Hampton, in a manner the most re-

tired. On this occasion she assisted in arranging and disposing of Garrick's letters. The state of her mind at the time will be seen by the following serious remark she made on the occasion: "Where now are almost all those great men who wrote these letters? The play-writers and the poets, where are they now? Little did they probably think, when they penned these bright epistles, that their heads were soon to be laid low."

She diligently improved the delightful retirement of Hampton, and was always closely engaged either in writing or reading. But her compositions at this time were chiefly poetic. She composed several interesting odes, which were eagerly sought after by her friends; but her 'Sacred Dramas' almost solely occupied her attention.

As the spring advanced, we find her again accompanying Mrs. Garrick to parties of pleasure in the higher circles; but her visits were less frequent than formerly, and where only amusement was likely to be found, she absented herself if possible. But if the society promised to be intellectual, and the conversation edifying, even though religion might have no chance of being introduced, she was not unwilling occasionally to visit. Her attachment to mere worldly society, however, though it might be intellectual, was daily diminishing. The serious impression made on her mind, which many of her former worldly associates had attributed to the death of Garrick, and which they had imagined would subside as certainly, if not so quickly, in her case as it had in theirs, they saw was gradually becoming deeper and more permanent. Like good seed sown in good ground, it had brought forth fruit to the glory of God; proving itself to be essentially different to that sorrow which the most hardened often feel at the death of a relative or friend, and which, as it leaves the heart unimpressed, speedily passes away. The

sorrow of the world, and godly sorrow, produce totally different effects.

About this time, Mrs. Boscawen, who was on terms of close intimacy with Miss More, and who was accustomed to forward to her any new publications that she thought deserving attention, sent her 'Cardiphonia.' A more suitable work could hardly have been selected. With its simple, yet accurate delineations of experimental piety, she was delighted; and it evidently gave her a clearer insight into the feelings characteristic of the truly pious, than she had before attained. "I like it," she says, "prodigiously; it is full of vital, experimental religion. I thought the first three letters the best; but I have not yet read them all."

These unequivocal proofs of Miss More's increasing piety were in the highest degree gratifying to her relatives, who had always been apprehensive that the attractions of worldly gaiety would, as was almost invariably their effect, render her perfectly indifferent to the claims of religion. Her parents, especially, were delighted to find that such was not the case. Her father, who was now in his eighty-first year, wrote her a pleasing poetic letter, expressive of the deep concern he had felt for her welfare, and of the pleasure he derived from her growing piety. In a letter to her sister she says: "Tell my father that I am quite delighted with his verses, and particularly that he could write them with so good a hand. I do not think that I shall write such verses at eighty-one."

In June, 1781, Miss More returned to Bristol, accompanied, on this occasion, by Mrs. Garrick, whom she had persuaded to pay her family a short visit. At the end of a month, that lady returned to Hampton; but Miss More remained till near the close of the year, actively engaged in adding to the stores of her own mind, and imparting knowledge to

some young pupils, many of whom were the daughters of most respectable families.

In the autumn, an incident occurred which called forth her benevolent exertions in aid of a young female, apparently of German extraction, of a delicate figure and most prepossessing appearance, who was found sitting under a hay-stack, a short distance from Bristol. By her manners, she seemed to have been genteelly brought up; but though the utmost efforts were used, no information could be elicited whence she came. She repaired to the cottagers in the neighbourhood, to solicit the gift of a little milk, which was readily given her, and which she gratefully received, when she again returned to her place under the hay-stack, where she would sit for hours. She could not be persuaded to enter a house, because, she said, *men* were there. At length her unhappy situation was made known to Miss More, who took a lively interest in her case. She employed every means to elicit from her some fragments of her history, but without effect. The mental malady of the unfortunate female had rendered her nearly incapable of speech, so that, though she could hear, she could scarcely articulate any language so as to be understood. Miss More commenced a subscription for her benefit, and succeeded in raising a sufficient sum to place her in a comfortable asylum near Bristol. Subsequently she was removed to Guy's hospital, where she died; but no tidings whence she came were ever obtained.

In the following December, (1781,) Miss More again quitted Bristol, to become Mrs. Garrick's companion through the winter. On her arrival in London, a circumstance occurred which roused into increased energy her serious impressions, and augmented considerably her disrelish for worldly pursuits. This was the sudden death of an infidel, whom she had often met. She had frequently heard

him declare, that at death, he knew he should be as if he had never been. His infidelity, however, afforded him no comfort. He was unable to stifle the voice of conscience; he was always terrified at the thought of death. Thus it always is with the sceptic; he vainly boasts of his belief in annihilation, yet he can place no confidence in his creed: at the first approach of death he begins to tremble. Infidelity can boast only when no danger is near; Christianity can triumph while nature sickens and dies.

In February, 1782, Miss More published, in one volume, her 'Sacred Dramas,' and an epistolary poem, entitled 'Sensibility.' She inscribed the volume to the Duchess of Beaufort. The work was well received, and had an extensive sale. It was designed chiefly for the young, whom it was well calculated to interest and instruct; but it may be doubted whether dramatic compositions can ever render the simple narratives of Scripture more interesting than they are in themselves. There is something in them so inimitably touching, that they seem to suffer from the most laboured attempts of human effort to give them increasing interest. Is not this a proof of their divinely-inspired origin?

It was evident that during the composition of this volume, Miss More's piety was becoming more deep and decided. Her views of the great leading points of Christianity were obviously expanding. The importance of salvation by faith in the Redeemer's atonement, and the impossibility of obtaining it in any other way, were seen by her in a clearer light, and regarded with increasing interest. But she was still so circumstanced as to render it extremely difficult not to mix with the fashionable world much more than was to her agreeable. She was at this time apprehensive that the pious tone of her volume would lead its readers to form a higher opinion of

her Christian character, than the humbling views she now had of herself would allow to be just. Nor was she without her fears that the statements contained in her volume, and its general tendency, might subject her to the charge of inconsistency, for her occasional mixture with the world. Nothing was clearer than that she was now earnestly seeking to release herself entirely from these entanglements. But she was laudably anxious to do it in a way the least offensive to her associates. If any proof were wanting of Miss More's growing piety, the deep-seated humility of which she was now the subject, would sufficiently establish the fact. A more certain characteristic of genuine piety than lowliness of mind, cannot be found. The first lesson the Christian convert learns, is to form a mean opinion of himself. This is the natural result of that discovery of depravity in his heart which every sincere Christian is led to make. Looking into himself he sees so much guilt and imperfection that he may well be apprehensive lest others should think of him too well. Hence the uniform opinion of the pious is, that each thinks himself the most unworthy object of the Divine favour. In the case of many excellent individuals, these opinions are ill founded ; in no instance were they more so than in reference to Miss More.

CHAPTER III.

Visit to Bath—Eager pursuit of Christian knowledge—Her Remarks on different writers—Reflections on the loss of a literary friend—Interesting interview with Dr. Johnson—Concern for the Abolition of Negro Slavery—Visit to Dr. Kennicott—Increasing seriousness of mind—Commencement of her intimacy with Bishop Porteus—Visit to Dr. Kennicott in his last illness—His death—Remarks on his character—Interesting anecdote respecting him.

For the benefit of her health, which was still delicate, Miss More repaired, towards the close of the winter of 1782, to Bath, whither she was accompanied by Mrs. Garrick. But, though her health was improved by the change, yet in other respects the visit afforded her no pleasure; and having no taste for trifling amusements, she quitted it as the spring advanced.

It was still her prevalent desire to obtain Scriptural knowledge: this she wisely regarded as, of all acquisitions, the most important. Hence she continued a diligent reader of the sacred volume, and of all its most approved explanatory writers. To this commendable practice may be ascribed that happy illustration and most apposite quotation of Scripture, which subsequently formed a prominent feature in her productions. With Bishop Lowth's expository works she was much interested; and though she thought them less devotional than might

have been wished—suited more for the critical than for the devout reader—yet she found them most instructive.

So desirous was Miss More to acquire comprehensive views of the Christian system, that she read nearly all the works of our best theologians. In one of her letters at this time she says, playfully, "I am up to my ears in books." Ample proof is given, in her correspondence, that she read with discrimination and judgment. Her remarks upon each writer were usually pertinent and just. To works illustrative of experimental piety she gave a decided preference; hence she valued Newton's 'Cardiphonia,' far beyond the productions of more erudite authors. Elegant compositions on the great subjects of religion, much as they pleased her taste, if they touched not the heart, she prized but little. Mere moral disquisitions, however eloquent, if not founded upon Christian principles, she thought of no value. Jorton's Sermons, which she had then been reading, she says, "are cold and low in doctrine."

Next to theology, history was her favourite study. Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall,' she now appears to have read carefully for the first time. His merits as a writer she much overrated; but she censured, with just severity, his malignant and insidious attack on Christianity.

Miss More still continued on terms of close intimacy with nearly all who made any literary pretensions; and though she wished to withdraw from the world, yet the extensive and highly respectable circle of her acquaintance, which rather increased than diminished, rendered this extremely difficult to effect. She still felt compelled to visit the ball-room occasionally, but she did it invariably with increasing dislike.

In April of this year, (1782,) she was called to mourn the loss, under circumstances peculiarly affecting, of her esteemed literary friend, the late

J. Chamberlayne, Esq., whom she had highly respected, and with whom she had often had the pleasure to converse on literary subjects. He had been persuaded, by the urgent entreaties of his friends, much against his own inclination, to accept an important office in the Treasury. Though perfectly able to perform its duties, he could never think himself so. The result was a serious attack of nervous depression, under the pressure of which he threw himself from the Treasury windows, and survived only a few hours. He sank under the weight of duties which he could have discharged for another, with all the ease imaginable, but the responsibilities of which he could not himself sustain. Some may ascribe this to mental weakness, but it was owing rather to excessive sensibility. It is commendable always to feel a proper degree of confidence; nothing can be well done without it: excessive timidity ought, equally with presumptuous and daring self-dependence, to be invariably discouraged. Those, however, who, notwithstanding all their efforts, are tortured under the withering influence of an overwrought sensibility, till existence itself becomes intolerable, must not be hastily condemned. "Judge not, that ye be not judged," is the wise admonition of Scripture. We are all the creatures of frailty and imperfection: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall."

Nearly at the same time that Miss More heard of the above melancholy event, she was apprized of the death of the amiable and pious Mrs. Smith, one of her most intimate friends. These events, with the declining health of some others, for whom she felt the highest regard, and whom she saw were gradually descending into the land whence no traveller returns, loosened her affection from the world, and gave to her mind a turn more decidedly serious.

Among the friends whose declining health she

regretted the most deeply, was that of Dr. Johnson, whom she frequently met, and whom she venerated, not only for his eminent learning, but more especially for the high regard he had always maintained, in all companies and under all circumstances, for religion. "Poor Johnson," she writes, "is in a bad state of health: I fear his constitution is breaking up. I am quite grieved at it; he will not leave an abler defender of religion and virtue behind him."

The abolition of negro slavery had about this time become, through the humane and most indefatigable exertions of Clarkson, Wilberforce, and others, a subject of general remark. Individuals of all classes took a lively interest in its discussion. Miss More felt the deepest concern for its success, and ultimately employed her pen in its behalf.

In June, 1782, Miss More paid another visit to her friend Dr. Kennicott. Dr. Johnson was then at Oxford, probably for the benefit of his health, which continued in a sad declining state. The doctor related to her, at one of their meetings, in a way peculiar to himself, many early incidents of his college life. During her stay at Oxford she spent a day or two most happily with Johnson, at Dr. Barrington's, the Bishop of Landaff. Henderson, and several other eminent literary characters were present, and the learned doctor seemed for a time to forget his infirmities.

She proceeded to Bristol in July, and resumed with undiminished activity her scholastic duties; still, however, devoting herself most closely to her literary pursuits. In the autumn, several distinguished individuals paid her a visit; Mrs. Montagu spent a few days with her, much to the satisfaction of both parties. The meeting of such kindred minds must have been highly interesting. They were alike devotedly attached to literature. Their talents, if not of equal eminence, were both distinguished; and each was

MEMOIR, &c.

CHAPTER I.

Opening remarks—Ancestry—Birth—Incidents of childhood—Removal to Bristol—Ardent thirst for improvement—Attack of illness—Early literary taste—Acquaintance with Mr. Turner—its termination—Desire of improvement—Introduction to Garrick—to Johnson—Views of fashionable life—Remarks on mental culture.

Among those British females whose names deserve to be handed down to posterity, that of Hannah More ranks unquestionably in the highest class. A faithful, concise memoir of a lady so distinguished for her piety and activity in the best of causes, ought certainly to be found in the records of female biography.

Were it true, as some have groundlessly asserted, that Hannah More was of mean extraction, it would be matter of but little importance:—"who boasts his stock," says Feltham pithily, "commands but what's another's." Such, however, is not the case. As to the antiquity of her family, two of her ancestors are said to have been captains in Cromwell's army. At that remote period, and for many generations afterwards, the family inherited

estates of considerable value on the borders of Suffolk and Norfolk. They were then nonconformists both in the male and female branches, and appear to have possessed sterling piety and strong minds.

An unhappy dispute arose respecting the division of the family property at the decease of Hannah More's grandfather, or of one of his brothers. This led to a lawsuit between her father, Jacob More, and his relatives, which unfortunately, and as it subsequently appeared, unjustly, terminated against her father, by which he was deprived of property to a considerable amount.

Jacob More had received a liberal education at a first-rate school in Norwich; and having made great proficiency in his studies, he was designed for the church, most of the family having by that time, for some unknown reason, become episcopalians; but the unhappy termination of the lawsuit occasioned the abandonment of this project, and he eventually became master of a foundation-school near Stapleton. After a short time he married the daughter of a respectable farmer in the neighbourhood, who had received a good education, and possessed a sound, vigorous mind. To her wise council and judicious management, her daughters, of whom she had four, were much indebted for their future success.

Hannah, the subject of this memoir, was the fourth daughter. She was born at Stapleton, in the county of Gloucester, in 1745. From her infancy her talents and her thirst for information were pre-eminent. Her memory was so retentive, that by merely hearing her sisters repeat their lessons, she had acquired considerable knowledge of the French language. To this early knowledge of French she was perhaps indebted for the readiness and elegance with which she spoke it subsequently.

It was Mr. More's wish to give his daughters that education which would qualify them to conduct a respectable boarding-school, by which they might hope comfortably to provide for themselves. Such, however, were his views of the requisite qualifications, that he thought a knowledge of the Greek and Latin classics, and of the mathematics, all of which he was competent to teach, perfectly unnecessary. Hence he discouraged the efforts of Hannah to make these attainments, under the apprehension that they would be injurious rather than beneficial. Nor could he be induced, such was his aversion to female pedantry, to become Hannah's Latin tutor, without considerable reluctance, though urged to it repeatedly by Mrs. More, and by Hannah herself. Her perseverance, however, at length overcame the father's scruples, and Hannah thus attained her object. Pleased with her success, she carefully cultivated an acquaintance with the Latin classics.

Poets are said to be born such, with as much truth probably as many other things are said. But whether Hannah was born a poet or not, it is certain that she had a taste for the muses almost from her cradle. Every slip of paper she could procure, was employed as manuscript for her poetical effusions. Some of these are said to have been of considerable merit. Nor were her early compositions confined to poetry; she wrote essays in prose, which are said have been by no means contemptible. But all these juvenile productions were deposited, not in a secure portfolio, in which case they would probably have formed some pages of her life, but in the very unclassical, dark corner, where the maid kept her dirty brushes, whence they were taken, probably, only to be committed to the flames; a fate which not only the early,

but the entire productions of some writers might have met with, without detriment to the reputation of their authors, and greatly to the benefit of public morals.

About 1757, Mr. More thought it desirable that his eldest daughter, not then twenty years old, should open a boarding-school at Bristol, and Hannah, then in her twelfth year, was placed under her sister's care. It had been the earnest endeavour of Mr. and Mrs. More, not merely to give their daughters a suitable, useful education, but to instil into their minds a reverence for religion, and to show them the importance, not only of possessing pure and elevated sentiments, but of pursuing also discreet and orderly conduct, in order to secure the establishment of a good reputation. These endeavours had not been in vain. From the first opening of the school at Bristol, it was conducted by the elder Miss More with that discretion and propriety, which insured it a measure of success beyond their most sanguine expectations.

Under the care of her sister, Hannah enjoyed great facilities for acquiring information, her thirst for which increased daily. Here she had the use of more books than she had been favoured with in her father's library; the whole of which, except a few select Greek and mathematical works, he had unfortunately lost, owing to the carelessness of the individual to whom they had been entrusted when he removed from Norfolk.

The Spectator, which now for the first time came under her notice, she read with great attention, and considerable benefit. In 1659, the elder Mr. Sheridan delivered his interesting course of lectures on eloquence, at Bristol, on which Miss More's establishment attended. So much was the youthful mind of Hannah delighted on this occasion, that

she composed some excellent laudatory lines, which on being presented to the lecturer, induced him to seek an acquaintance with their author, with whose conversation he was highly pleased.

Shortly after this, Hannah experienced one of those alarming attacks of illness, to which at intervals she had been subject from her infancy, and so continued occasionally to the close of her life. The intelligent Dr. Woodward was the physician consulted on the occasion. In one of his calls, when she had become convalescent, he was so captivated with her conversation, that he entirely forgot the object of his visit till he was quitting the house, when he recollected that he had omitted to inquire after his patient's health, and he had to return to her room for this purpose.

In 1760, Hannah became acquainted with Ferguson, who was then delivering his astronomical lectures at Bristol. The intimacy thus incidentally formed, was mutually interesting, and the friendship lasted through life. Her singular talents were now known, and highly appreciated in the city of Bristol. Among her most intimate friends was Mr. Peach, a linen-draper, who had been the intimate friend of Hume, and had enjoyed to such a degree the confidence of that celebrated historian, that he had committed to his care the correction of his history, then in manuscript. This gentleman possessed a highly cultivated taste, with a mind of unusual grasp, and Hannah always spoke of the benefit she derived from his conversation, in the highest terms of admiration.

To furnish young ladies with suitable pieces to commit to memory, instead of exceptionable extracts from plays, of which the school-books, then extant, almost solely consisted, Hannah published, in 1762, her "Search after Happiness," a pastoral drama. Though she was then only in her seven-

teenth year, the production was skilfully drawn up, and well received.*

Her attacks of indisposition were now so frequent, as to occasion great interruption to her studies; and it was thought desirable, in order to afford her some relaxation, and to recruit her strength, that she should try the benefit of a change of air. For this purpose she repaired for a short time to Weston-Super-Mare, and here her intimacy with the talented and accomplished Dr. Langhorn commenced. This was continued, and an interesting correspondence kept up, till the doctor's unhappy irregularities broke it off.

Having partly recovered her health she returned to Bristol, where she spent the greater part of her time in assisting her sisters in the discharge of their scholastic duties; occasionally, however, visiting some of her literary friends, who had now become rather numerous. She was on terms of intimacy with Dean Tucker and Dr. Ford, besides several individuals of equal eminence. She had free access to all the choicest libraries in and around Bristol, of which she made the best use. To improve her style, and to impart to it that ease, elegance, and vivacity which accorded with her taste, she exercised herself frequently in translating from the Latin, Italian, and Spanish languages, which she now carefully studied. Some of these productions were shown to her friends, and were pronounced by competent judges to be admirably executed, but as they were not to her taste she destroyed them all.

About her twentieth year her intimacy with Dr.

* In a few months it passed through three editions. She subsequently remarked respecting it, in a short preface on its republication with some other works, "It has afforded serious satisfaction to the author to learn, that this little poem has been used in families and schools to supply the place of impure and pernicious publications; and should it be still happily instrumental in promoting a regard to religion and virtue in the minds of young persons, affording them an innocent, and not altogether useless amusement in the exercise of recitation, the end for which it was composed will be fully answered."

Stonehouse, who had relinquished the medical for the clerical profession, and had taken a house not far from Miss More's school commenced. The doctor had been twenty years physician to the infirmary at Northampton, of which excellent charity he was the founder. In 1763 he took orders. He was a zealous, judicious, and eloquent preacher, of truly evangelical sentiments. Some idea may be formed of the high regard Miss More entertained for him by the following eulogistic lines from her pen, written in the fly-leaf of a French copy of Saurin's Sermons, which she had borrowed of the doctor.

" Ces divine ardeurs, cette sainte eloquence,
Ces sublime pensées, ces conceptions immense,
Ces essors évangélique, cette humilité profonde,
Cette connoissance unie a ce mépris du monde ;
Cet horreur du vice, cet amour de la vertu,
Cette extrême soumission a la volonté de Dieu;
Cette heureuse indifférence pour un monde incertain,
Cette compassion pour les moux du genre humain,
Cet amour et cette crainte de l'eternel Créateur,
Cette parfaite espérance dans le sang du Redempteur,
Enfin ces grand idées—ce language divin—
Qui charme, qui êleve, qui transport en Saurin ;
J'admire en le lisant ces beautés éclatantes,
En t'ecoutant, Docteur, les même beautés m'enchantent;
Semblable au prophète qui, le Saint Ecriture dit,
Laisse a son successeur son manteau et son esprit."

These lines have been thus translated: —

" That warmth divine, that holy eloquence,
Those thoughts sublime, conceptions so immense,
That holy zeal, that deep humility,
Extent of knowledge, perfect charity ;
That *dread* of vice, of virtue such a love,
That true submission to the will above;
That calm indifference on this changing scene,
That pity for the woes of mortal man ;
That love and fear of the eternal Good,
That perfect hope on the Redeemer's blood,
Those grand ideas, language so divine,
Which charm, exalt, transport us in Saurin ;
In reading *him* these beauties still appear,
In hearing *thee* those beauties charm *mine ear ;*
Like to that prophet who, as Scriptures say,
His cloak and spirit left, then wing'd to heaven his way !"

That a young lady of Miss More's accomplish-

ments, though she possessed but little property, should have had her admirers of the other sex, and among the wealthy too, was not matter of surprise. Accordingly we find, that in her twenty-first year she received a matrimonial offer from Mr. Turner, of Belmont-house, not far from Bristol—a gentleman of fortune, of a literary and cultivated taste, but nearly twice her age; and, as it appears, of unsettled, if not of eccentric habits. The following circumstances led to the intimacy. Two young ladies, Mr. Turner's nieces, were under the care of the Misses More. Mr. Turner had kindly requested them always to spend their holidays at Belmont-house, and to invite any young ladies they might wish as companions. Of this permission they gladly availed themselves, and on one occasion, as they knew that the Miss Mores would be pleased with a visit to their uncle's, they invited the two younger sisters, Hannah and Patty. So much was Mr. Turner delighted with the conversation of Miss Hannah, that he made her an offer of marriage, which, after due consideration, she thought proper to accept. The wedding-day was fixed, but when it had nearly approached, Mr. Turner deferred it. It was again fixed, on each occasion by himself, but he again, on the eve of its arrival, put it off. The elder sisters now interfered, as such conduct appeared dishonourable. Still Mr. Turner maintained that his attachment was unaltered, and wished again to name a day. Hannah evinced no petulant resentment, but firmly requested time to reconsider the matter. In this emergency she wisely consulted Dr. Stonehouse, and at his recommendation she calmly, but firmly, refused the alliance. The parting interview was friendly. Mr. Turner previously offered to settle on her an annuity for life, as a compensation, which she nobly declined to accept. That Mr. Turner's intentions were honourable there cannot

be a doubt: he considered himself certain of his prize, as he subsequently acknowledged; and his attachment was evidently sincere, as he could not rest satisfied without settling upon her, which he did, through her friend Dr. Stonehouse, without her knowledge, the annuity she declined to accept. He often spoke of her afterwards, always with admiration, and at his death he left her one thousand pounds.

Different individuals will view the result as a subject of regret, or otherwise, as their opinion of the case may happen to vary. Perhaps the separation, though it must have been painful to both individuals, was the wisest course; as it can hardly be imagined that a lady of Miss More's spirit, could have been really happy with an individual so irresolute and fickle. That he was censurable for dallying with her feelings cannot be denied. Even when a gentleman's intentions are honourable, it is highly improper, under any pretence, to trifle with a female in this delicate affair. Deliberately to deceive one is a disgrace to any man, and a crime of the deepest dye.

It would, perhaps, have been better had Miss More resisted the offer, when first made, with the same firmness with which she resisted it afterwards; as unequal matches seldom prove the means of happiness on either side. But taking all the circumstances into consideration,—the idea of being associated with a gentleman of great wealth, who kept his carriage; of considerable personal accomplishments; of respectable literary attainments; of being mistress of a house elegantly furnished, delightfully situated, surrounded by an estate most tastefully laid out—was too much to expect from a lady so circumstanced. It was not without considerable emotion that Miss More summoned up courage to resist the offer at last; nor did even the dignity of her

mind enable her to do it but at the expense of much feeling. The resolution which she appears to have coupled with this determination, never more to form a similar engagement, to which she rigidly adhered through life, was unjustifiable; evincing a degree of self-command, less directed by those amiable feelings which form a prime constituent in female excellence, than can be held up to imitation.

No sooner was this affair settled, than Miss More returned with redoubled zeal to her literary pursuits. Her connexions became increasingly numerous; and her reputation, as a lady of most promising talent, was extensively known. This afforded her facilities for an introduction to some of the first writers of the age; a gratification which she was extremely anxious to enjoy. Her zeal, though in her case it was not attended with any ill effects, owing to her singular firmness of mind and uniform decorum, yet led her to the pursuit of a course not seldom ruinous to all moral feeling. Being passionately desirous to see Garrick perform some of Shakspeare's plays, she became a frequent attendant at the theatre, on her visits to the metropolis, which were now rather frequent. That her conduct was commendable in this respect, none but those who are fascinated with these puerilities will assert. Her escape from the morally impure atmosphere, uninfected and uninjured, must never encourage others to pursue the same course; for to one that passes through these scenes of vice unhurt, thousands are ruined by them for ever. A course that is morally evil, or only likely to be so in its effects, though genius and literature may lavishly shower around it all their enchantments, ought never to be pursued.

Miss More's enthusiastic love of poetic genius, prompted her, in one of her excursions around London, to visit Twickenham, the village where Pope

formerly resided; "her tuneful Alexander and beloved bard," as she called him. She had regarded this as almost a sacred spot, and had often, as she says, "created to herself an imaginary Themis," but she found little that was worthy of admiration in the house, the garden, or the grotto. Her conjecture that Pope's motive for preferring interment in the humble church of Twickenham, to the splendid mausoleum of Westminster Abbey, was the same as had induced Cæsar to say, he had rather be the first man in a village, than the last at Rome, was classical and ingenious, if not true.

Miss More now returned to Bristol to assist in the management of her sister's flourishing and excellent establishment. Her love of literature, however, continued unabated; and she neglected no means of mental culture within her reach. With Dr. Stonehouse she continued on terms of the closest intimacy, and from his conversation and advice she derived the greatest benefit.* In the same year she again visited London, accompanied by two of her sisters. On this occasion the desire she had long felt to be introduced to Dr. Johnson, was gratified. On her previous visit to town, she had, in a letter to a friend who was equally the friend of

* In 1773, at the request of Dr. Stonehouse and others, she composed the following poetic tribute to the virtues of Samuel Love, M.A., Fellow of Baliol College, Oxford, who died that year, at the early age of twenty-nine. The lines were inscribed on a monument, erected by subscription, in Bristol cathedral :—

"When worthless grandeur fills the embellished urn,
No poignant grief attends the sable bier;
But when distinguished excellence we mourn,
Deep is the sorrow, genuine is the tear.

Stranger! shouldst thou approach this awful shrine,
The merits of the honoured dead to seek,
The friend, the son, the Christian, the divine,
Let those who knew him, those who loved him, speak.

O, let them in some pause of anguish say,
What zeal inflamed, what faith enlarged his heart;
How glad the unfettered spirit winged its way,
From earth to heaven, from blessing to be blest."

Garrick, given an interesting description of her feelings on seeing that tragedian perform in the character of Lear. This letter was shown to Garrick, who was so delighted with it, that he expressed a desire to be introduced to the writer. Shortly after her arrival in town, the introduction accordingly took place, to the gratification of both parties. Garrick now in his turn introduced his new acquaintance to all his literary friends, and among others to Dr. Johnson. The interview between the herculean doctor and his fair admirer was mutually pleasing. The doctor was in one of his best moods, and received her courteously, accosting her with a verse from a morning hymn she had written at the request of Sir James Stonehouse. The conversation was interesting, and they parted mutually gratified with the visit. Miss More was now almost a daily visitor at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where she enjoyed frequent intercourse with the most distinguished literati of the day. On one occasion she had the pleasure to be introduced to Barrette and Burke. Coming thus often into contact with minds of this high order, could not fail to be beneficial to one whose thirst after knowledge was intense, and whose capabilities for attaining it were seldom equalled.

After remaining six weeks in town she again returned to Bristol, to pursue her unambitious but most useful career. Her next visit to the metropolis was in February, 1775. She continued there on this occasion about the same time, visiting chiefly at Hampton and at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where she enjoyed frequently the company of Garrick and Johnson, besides many other literary characters. Among these were Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Carter, and Mrs. Boscawen. No society could have been more congenial to her taste, or more conducive to her mental culture, and few individuals could have more diligently improved it. She had penetration to dis-

cover the marked features of each individual's mind with whom she came in contact, and could distinguish with ease and accuracy their nice and delicate shades of variation; pointing out what was peculiar to each, and what was common to all, a talent, without which but little benefit will be derived from intercourse with minds the most refined and cultivated. The study of character is as essential as the study of books.

The facilities enjoyed by Miss More for pursuing her literary predilection, and acquiring a correct and pure taste, were most auspicious, and must have far exceeded the most sanguine expectation she could ever have formed. She was now fairly introduced to the first literary circles, and was received by all with cordiality and esteem. Nor did the frivolities of fashionable life, pernicious as their influence often is, impair the vigour of her moral feelings. Though she was not then decidedly pious, yet the habits of virtue in which she had been trained, the veneration in which she held the Scriptures, the importance she attached to external religious worship, the self-command which she always possessed, her reverence for the Sabbath, and the correctness of her deportment, under all circumstances, preserved her, through the Divine blessing, from being dazzled and ensnared by the fascinating scenes she beheld. Even at this period she, saw through the flimsy veil in which vice always seeks to conceal herself.

The scenes of amusement which afforded gratification to her friends, and to which they conducted her, from the kindest motives, proved to her annoying and vexatious. Coming from the opera, she exclaimed,

> "Bear me, O God, O quickly bear me hence,
> To wholesome solitude, the nurse of sense."

Though her heart does not appear then to have

been touched by Divine grace, nor her mind sufficiently enlightened to discover the important claims which the realities of eternity had upon her attention, yet she felt enough of their importance to make her see the folly of listening, for hours, to sounds which could only divert the mind's attention from nobler pursuits. Hence she resolved, with her characteristic firmness, never again to visit the opera. In allusion to the lines above quoted she says, "This apostrophe broke from me in coming from the opera, the first time I ever went, and the last time I shall ever go."

Pleased as Miss More's Bristol friends were with the very flattering reception she had met with in the metropolitan literary circles, yet were they not without many apprehensions that it would diminish, if it did not destroy, the devout regard she had always paid to religion. Hearing that she had attended some Sunday parties, her excellent and kind friend, Dr. Stonehouse, wrote her an affectionate letter on the subject. This most Christian conduct of the worthy doctor was highly commendable, and is well worthy of imitation, though in her case it did not appear to have been needed. Adverting to it, in one of her letters to her sisters, she says, "Thank my dear Dr. S—— for his kind seasonable admonitions on my last Sunday's engagement. Conscience had done its office before, nay, was busy at the time; and if it did not dash the cup of pleasure to the ground, infused at least a tincture of wormwood into it. I did think of the alarming call, 'What dost thou here?'"

For fashionable display and fashionable diversions, she felt an increasing dislike. Nor could she be induced to comply with the former, or follow the latter, only so far as she hoped thereby to enrich her mind. She never appears to have been unmindful how utterly incapable these things were to make their vota-

ries truly happy. "The more I see of the honoured, the proud, and the great," she writes, "the more I see of the littleness and the unsatisfactoriness of all created good, and that no earthly good can fill up the desires of the immortal principle within." Many will probably, as she hints, think this to be the dark side of the picture, but, as she well adds, "It is, nevertheless, the right side, and the one that shows things as they really are."

In June of this year, 1775, Miss More composed and published her legendary tale, 'Sir Eldred of the Bower,' with the addition of a small poem she had by her, previously written, entitled 'The Bleeding Rock.' She was little more than a fortnight from the time the idea of 'Sir Eldred' had occurred to her mind, in composing the tale. She forwarded the MS. to Mr. Cadell, requesting he would give her what he thought it was worth. The sum he offered her far exceeded her expectations, but in addition to it, he generously assured her that if she could ascertain what Goldsmith received for his 'Deserted Village,' and if the amount he offered her fell short of that sum, he would make it up. The bookseller and Miss More were then entirely unknown to each other, though they were natives of the same village. In all her subsequent publications, Miss More experienced the same generosity from Mr. Cadell, and the connexion thus formed, existed through life, not only with unabated, but with increased mutual esteem and regard.

The merits of this publication fully sustained Miss More's reputation. She received letters from individuals of the first-rate talent, speaking in the highest terms of its excellence. It was for days the chief subject of conversation among the literary circles in town. Garrick, and Johnson, and Burke, and Mrs. Montagu, with many others, spoke in its praise. All were persuaded that it was only the first-fruits of an abundant harvest.

Early in 1776, Miss More again visited London, where she remained much longer than on any former occasion, not returning till the following June. Admired as she had been before, she was much more so now, and all her friends were anxious to congratulate her on the success of her publication. She now enjoyed frequent interviews with Dr. Johnson, and with nearly all the literati of the day. Her situation was indeed most favourable to improvement, which she still sought with the utmost eagerness. "Would you believe it?" she writes, "that in the midst of the pomps and vanities of this wicked town, that I have taken it into my head to study like a dragon; I read four or five hours every day, and wrote ten hours yesterday. How long this will last I do not know, but I fear no longer than the bad weather."

It was, however, far more for its literary advantages than because it was the means of introducing her into the highest circles of fashion, that Miss More preferred a residence in town. Her object in so frequently visiting the metropolis was entirely dissimilar to that which ladies have generally in view. To conform to the fashionable follies of the day, so as not to appear singular, was one of her greatest annoyances. Her remarks on a mere fashionable life were most severe. Mental attainments were almost solely the objects of her pursuit, and she had an increasing dislike to everything that diverted her attention from this favourite study. It was this and this only, that led her, when she was in town, to be a constant attendant at Drury-lane every night when Garrick appeared. And as that consummate actor had about that time determined very soon to retire from the stage, she lost no opportunity of being present when he performed; and saw him act, for the last time, his several different characters, each time with increasing admiration; and her letters at this period consist

almost entirely of descriptions of his powers, and of her feelings on witnessing them, drawn up, though evidently in haste, yet with great force and beauty.

Purity of taste is an object of great importance to all who make the least literary pretensions; it is more especially so to those who write, or who intend to write for the public, and ought by such to be most assiduously cultivated. A slovenly writer, be his thoughts ever so excellent, deserves censure. That the attainment of an easy, chaste, yet perspicuous and animated style, was regarded by Miss More in its just light, there cannot be a doubt; but that the course she pursued to acquire it was the wisest she could have taken, even had it been the safest, instead of being the most dangerous, perhaps none will contend. The experiment she made was one of great risk and peril; but owing to the native vigour of her mind, to the sound, biblical, and moral instruction she had early received, and above all, to the care of a kind Providence, she happily escaped from the snares of vice—we will not say unhurt, for the most pure can hardly fail to receive some degree of evil from scenes of this description. Let none, therefore, venture to take the same course in hope of similar success. There was no occasion, even in her day, to have resorted to theatrical exhibitions for the cultivation of genius: far less occasion is there now. Happy is it for us and for our children, that the best and purest writers are now to be found on the side of virtue and religion. Men of the greatest genius and of the most cultivated taste, some dead and many living, have not only nobly defended the ramparts, but have employed their talents in describing the essential features of that holy religion, in the elucidation of which Miss More subsequently wrote her best productions.

CHAPTER II.

Attention to her scholastic duties—Visit to Norfolk—Excursion to Hampshire—Composition of her 'Percy'—Its performance at Drury Lane—Serious attack of illness—Death of Garrick—His funeral—Appearance of her 'Fatal Falsehood'—Her serious impressions—Visit to Oxford—Ramble through Wiltshire and Hants—Commences her 'Sacred Dramas'—Their publication—Her increasing piety—Humbling views she had of herself.

After a residence of nearly six months in London, in the enjoyment of every advantage for mental culture, associated with individuals of the purest taste, few could have returned perfectly contented, as did Miss More, to the school establishment at Bristol; but neither the attractive scenes she had beheld, nor the applause she had received, had in any degree impaired the native simplicity of her mind. All her friends were delighted to perceive that she had escaped from every entanglement uninjured. She continued at Bristol during the remaining part of 1776, and in the ensuing year she visited her relatives in Suffolk and Norfolk, performing a tour of considerable extent through the borders of these counties. On this occasion she visited Norwich and most of the towns, with almost every gentleman's seat of any celebrity in the vicinity. In her tour she complied with a pressing invitation from Mrs. Barbauld, to pay her a visit, and with this talented lady she spent a day or two most pleasantly.

From Norfolk, Miss More proceeded to London, some time in July, where she spent some weeks, chiefly at Garrick's, whom she accompanied in his almost daily visits to the nobility and gentry in and around the metropolis. He had the penetration to discover that she possessed talents of the highest order, and hence was pleased to introduce her to circles where they would be duly appreciated. On one occasion they made a hasty excursion into Hampshire, to Farnborough Place, the seat of Mr. Wilmot, where they met a large and splendid party. The intimacy thus commenced between the Wilmot family and Miss More was a source of comfort to both parties, and continued unimpaired through life.

Towards the end of August, after an absence of near five months, most pleasantly spent, Miss More returned to Bristol. In November she again visited London. Her object on this occasion was chiefly to give the finishing touch, under the advice of Garrick, to a tragedy she had been for some time composing, entitled 'Percy.' Harris, the manager at Drury-lane, had agreed to give it a trial, and when finished, it was performed under Garrick's superintendance. Its success was most flattering, and far exceeded the most sanguine expectations of both the author and her friends. It was, however, a production of uncommon merit. Every one was warm in its praise. The house received it with shouts of applause; it was performed six nights successively, and six more, within a very short time, always to crowded houses. Four thousand copies of the first edition were speedily sold off. A profusion of congratulations were poured in upon her on this occasion, by literary characters of the first eminence. One writes, "When you see the fair author, crown her, cover her, hide her with laurels; and when I see her I will scatter flowers before her." The Duke of Northumberland and Earl Percy thanked her for

the honour it had done them. "I have only to wish you health," wrote Mrs. Montagu, "to wear your bays with pleasure, and that you may ever be as you have been, the pride of your friends and the humiliation of your enemies." From Mrs. Boscawen she received a most ingeniously formed wreath of laurel, with an affectionate laudatory letter.

About this time Miss More suffered much from an attack of illness, which confined her to her room for some weeks. As soon as she was able to be removed she accepted a pressing invitation from the Garricks to pay them a visit at Hampton. At this charming retreat she remained till the spring of 1778, employing herself, as her health would permit, in literary pursuits, and mixing less frequently than before with the beau monde. Her affliction had evidently excited in her mind a greater dislike to mere worldly pursuits than she had before experienced. Her reading was at this time of a different kind to what it had before been. The books she now consulted, showed that a deep impression had been made on her mind as to the importance of divine things. The Bible, which indeed she never appears to have wholly laid aside, she now read constantly. "Three times," says she, "have I read through the epistles since I have been here." Nor was her reading solely confined to the Scriptures; she consulted the works of several eminent commentators, but as they were more critical than evangelical, they were not likely to discover to her the glory of the gospel. Of West on the Resurrection, she speaks in the highest terms, commending it as an excellent work, calculated to confound the cavils of the infidel, and to confirm the hopes of the believer.

The impression thus made on Miss More's mind was deepened by the decease, during this year, of some of her most intimate friends. One, whose loss she severely deplored, was Sarah, the second wife of

her friend Dr. Stonehouse. She died in 1788, at the age of fifty-five, and Miss More composed the following lines on the occasion :—

"Come resignation! wipe the human tear
Domestic anguish drops o'er virtue's bier;
Bid selfish sorrow hush the fond complaint,
Nor from the God she loved detain the saint.
Truth, meekness, patience, honoured shade! were thine,
And holy hope and charity divine:
Though these thy forfeit being could not save,
Thy faith subdued the terrors of the grave.
Oh! if thy living excellence could teach,
Death has a loftier emphasis of speech;
Let death thy strongest lesson then impart,
And write PREPARE TO DIE, on every heart."

During this year the Rev. Thomas Hunter, M.A., vicar of Feversham, with whom she had been intimate, who had written an able work against Lord Bolingbroke's philosophy, died; and at the earnest request of his son, Miss More composed for him the following epitaph :—

"Go, happy spirit, seek that blissful land,
Where zealous Michael leads the glorious band
Of those who fought for truth; blest spirit, go,
And perfect all the good begun below:
Go hear applauding saints delighted tell,
How vanquished falsehood at thy bidding fell.
Blest in that heaven, whose paths thy virtues sought;
Blest in that God, whose cause thou well hast fought;
O, let thy honoured shade his care approve,
Who this memorial reads of filial love;
A son whose father living was his pride,
A son who mourns that such a father died."

These compositions, with the events that accompanied them, were as mementoes to her of the instability of everything earthly, and served not only to perpetuate, but to render more indelible, the serious impressions recently made on her mind by her affliction. By all who watch the movements of God in his dealings with the heart, they will be regarded as proofs of his gracious intentions towards her; but the impression on Miss More's mind, though it thus became more permanently fixed, was nevertheless not yet sufficiently powerful to divert her attention

entirely from the tragic muse. Or if it was, she had not the courage to avow it, and to refuse the importunity of Garrick and her friends, who pressed her to make a second attempt. Encouraged by her former success, she commenced her tragedy, entitled 'Fatal Falsehood,' four acts of which she composed during her continuance at Garrick's, with which he was much pleased. She completed it at Bristol, whither she repaired in April 1778, having then become convalescent.

In the following winter she suffered another rather severe attack of illness; and in January, 1779, before she had recovered, she was summoned to London by Mrs. Garrick, to mourn with her for the death of Garrick, who had expired after a short illness, on the 20th January, while on a visit at Lord Spencer's. Such was her esteem for the deceased, and her attachment to the bereaved wife, that she instantly, at the risk of her health, and almost of her life, complied with the invitation. She found Mrs. Garrick at the house of a friend, whither she had been kindly invited to stay while the funeral preparations were making.

It is probable that the sorrow she experienced on this occasion was much augmented by the distressing uncertainty, which she could not but feel, as to the deceased's preparedness for the solemn event. Correct as she knew him to have been in his usual deportment—and she bore this testimony to his memory "that she never witnessed in any family more decorum, propriety, and regularity than in his,"—yet she could not but have been apprehensive that far too little attention had been paid by him, in his habitual conduct, to the great concerns of religion. Her mind was sufficiently enlightened to know, that the maintenance of that external piety, which the world accounts sufficient to secure its possessor's eternal interests, often lulls the conscience into dan-

gerous and fatal security, while there is no solid hope on which it can rest.

That Garrick was a man of distinguished talent it would be ridiculous to deny; but that his talents were more showy than solid, more dazzling than useful, is unquestionable. Perhaps few, possessed of such capabilities, have employed them to so little really good purpose. His conversational powers, and the inexhaustible fund of his wit, have seldom been equalled—never surpassed. But were they employed on the side of virtue, or in any way the least likely to serve its interests? Were they not, on the contrary, often exerted to create a smile at its expense? Was it not his object to amuse, more than to benefit, the individuals with whom he associated? Was not the moral influence of his conversation, taking the most charitable view of it we can, pernicious, rather than otherwise? Looking at talent in the light in which Christianity presents it to our view, we find it increases its possessor's responsibility, according to the measure of it he may enjoy: "where much is given, of him will much be required." What we possess, either of natural or acquired endowments, was given us for the use of others, as well as ourselves. It is irrational to suppose that talent is not misapplied, when used almost solely, either for our own or for others' amusement. That such was the use to which Garrick devoted his life is undeniable. One cannot help regretting that an individual with such powers should have spent all his life on such trifles. Had he employed his pen in the production of some work of genius, for which he was not incapable, he might have lived to some purpose. It will, perhaps, be said, that though he did not avowedly serve the interests of piety, yet he did it indirectly, by exposing the hollow pretensions of its professed friends. But it may be doubted whether individuals, who are not themselves decidedly pious, can do this

to any useful purpose. Such attempts to expose hypocrisy have a much more powerful tendency to degrade piety, and to encourage the vicious in their follies, than to check vice. The friendship of the world is enmity against God. "He that is not with me," saith the Redeemer, "is against me." It is not enough that we cease to do evil, we must also learn to do well. In the light of the Scriptures he is an unprofitable servant, be his moral conduct ever so consistent, who spends his talents to no useful purpose.

It has already been shown, that Miss More's attachment to fashionable life had never been strong. She had been led into it by her love of literature; and so far as it had promoted that object, it had afforded her satisfaction. But her affliction in London, previous to Garrick's death, with the attack of illness she had experienced on her return to Bristol, followed up by the unexpected and very sudden death of one who formed almost the only tie that held her in connexion with worldly gaiety, made a very considerable alteration in her mind; and though her conduct was not immediately very different to what it had been, yet from that time she sought more carefully to sever herself gradually from all her worldly connexions; an object which she subsequently, through the grace of God, was happily able to effect.

Anxious to witness the interment of him whom she had so much admired, she went with Miss Cardogan to Westminster Abbey. The funeral was conducted with great pomp. Sheridan was chief-mourner, and ten noblemen were pall-bearers. The scene was most affecting. A deep solemnity seemed to pervade the hearts of all, while "the whole choir sang," as she says, "in streams only less sublime than will be the archangel's trump, Handel's fine anthem." The eyes of all were suffused

with tears, while the solemn funeral service was being read. With a large majority of the spectators this was only the involuntary tear which nature lets fall on such occasions: all that they had felt was forgotten as a dream, immediately they withdrew from the place, and they participated in the gay diversions of the evening of the same day, as if nothing had occurred. It was far different with herself. The serious impressions previously made on her mind were still further deepened, and her attachment to the world still further diminished. She quitted the scene, seriously reflecting on the vast importance of duly preparing for the same great change which the deceased had undergone.

Miss More remained in London with Mrs. Garrick for several months. But though she was still on terms of close intimacy with many ladies of rank, and with all the most talented authors in and around the metropolis, yet so much had her love of retirement increased, that she could seldom be persuaded to mix with the gay circles. On occasions when she was induced to do so, it was either to avoid giving offence to some kind friend; or when she could find no plausible excuse, except a positive refusal. A deep sense of the value of time, and of her responsibility for its improvement, seemed to rest upon her mind. To morning visits she was exceedingly averse, accounting them, as she says, "almost an immorality." She read closely for several hours daily, and the works she selected were chiefly theological.

During the spring of 1779 her tragedy, entitled 'Fatal Falsehood,' was performed at Drury-lane; and though the season for bringing it out was ill chosen, as many of the first players had left the town, yet it was received with great applause, and had a run but little inferior to its predecessor. Its merits were highly applauded by the first-rate critics,

and taking all circumstances into consideration, its success far exceeded the expectation of her friends. As to herself, she felt little interested in its fate: her attention was gradually becoming more intensely fixed on objects of far more importance.

Miss More returned to Bristol in June, 1779, where she remained several months, quietly devoting the greater part of her time to reading and study. Her anxiety for biblical and theological knowledge was evidently increasing. In the December following she paid Mrs. Garrick another visit. They spent the winter chiefly at Hampton, in almost perfect solitude. Yet, she says, "I am never dull, not being reduced to the fatigue of entertaining dunces, or of being obliged to listen to them." A remark which she probably made, not so much in reference to juvenile pupils, though, in frequent cases, that is sufficiently tedious, as to the insipid conversation and inexcusable ignorance of many respectable adults.

As the spring of 1780 advanced, she accompanied Mrs. Garrick in some occasional journeys to London, to visit a few select literary friends. She spent an evening very agreeably with Johnson, at Miss Reynolds's. The doctor's health was enfeebled, but his mind was in full vigour, and, with all his characteristic love of moral consistency, he severely reprimanded her for flippantly quoting some passage in Tom Jones, seizing the occasion to denounce indignantly the whole of Fielding's works as pernicious and dangerous.

In one of Mrs. Garrick's visits to London, about this time, she persuaded Miss More to accompany her to an assembly. The company, though large, was select and highly respectable, yet it afforded her no amusement; she greatly preferred the same number of hours spent in retirement and study, or in conversation with a choice friend or two, with minds akin to her own. Hence she preferred the calm delightful quiet of Hampton, to any town residence,

though, on account of the sad reminiscences it awakened, it was somewhat melancholy.

In April, 1780, Miss More complied with an invitation from Dr. Kennicot, to pay him a visit at Oxford. Through him she was introduced to many excellent and learned members of the university. The most distinguished of these was Dr. Horne, then president of Magdalen College, and afterwards Bishop of London, with whom a correspondence, delightful to both parties, was kept up during the remainder of life.

From Oxford she proceeded to Bristol, early in May, and there remained till near the close of the year, when she again became Mrs. Garrick's companion for some months, residing, as before, chiefly at Hampton. Her diligent attention to her literary pursuits was unabated. She devoted many hours daily to reading and writing, allowing no part of her time, on which she set the highest value, to be unoccupied.

A deep sense of the value of time pervaded her mind, and she composed, about this period, for her own use, the following soliloquy:

Soft slumbers now mine eyes forsake;
My powers are all renew'd;
May my freed spirit too awake,
With heavenly strength endued!

Thou silent murderer, SLOTH, no more
My mind imprisoned keep;
Nor let me waste another hour
With thee, thou felon, SLEEP.

Hark, O my soul, could dying men
One lavished hour retrieve,
Though spent in tears and pass'd in pain,
What treasures would they give!

But seas of pearl and mines of gold,
Were offered them in vain
Their pearl of countless price is lost; *
And where's the promis'd gain?

Lord, when thy day of dread account
For squander'd hours shall come,
Oh, let them not increase th' amount,
And swell the former sum!

* Matthew xiii. 46.

Teach me in health each good to prize,
I, dying, shall esteem;
And every pleasure to despise,
I then shall worthless deem.

For all thy wondrous mercies past,
My grateful voice I raise,
While thus I quit the bed of rest,
Creation's Lord to praise.

At the earnest entreaties of some friends, to whom these lines had been shewn, Miss More consented to their publication some time afterwards, when she prefixed to them the following remarks: "As early rising is conducive to health, and to the improvement of the mind in knowledge and piety, this soliloquy is designed to promote in young people, to whom it is more particularly recommended, so commendable a habit, which, if contracted in early life, is the less liable to be departed from in riper years."

Literary attainments were now regarded by her in their true light, not as a personal embellishment, to be cultivated solely for its possessor's individual benefit, but as a talent, for the right use of which she was responsible, and would have to render up an account at the last day.

To avoid the bustle of the election at Bristol, as party spirit there ran very high, she went for a short tour through the counties of Wiltshire and Hants. She greatly enjoyed the excursion, and on her return applied herself with renewed vigour to her studies. She preferred the Bible to all other books; it was her daily companion, a lamp unto her feet and a light to her path; the more she studied it, the more it became endeared to her. She had commenced the composition of her 'Sacred Dramas,' an employment which afforded her the greatest pleasure. Her pursuits were still literary, but she now decidedly preferred sacred to profane literature.

In December, 1780, she again visited Mrs. Garrick, and, as in the preceding winters, passed the time chiefly at Hampton, in a manner the most re-

tired. On this occasion she assisted in arranging and disposing of Garrick's letters. The state of her mind at the time will be seen by the following serious remark she made on the occasion: "Where now are almost all those great men who wrote these letters? The play-writers and the poets, where are they now? Little did they probably think, when they penned these bright epistles, that their heads were soon to be laid low."

She diligently improved the delightful retirement of Hampton, and was always closely engaged either in writing or reading. But her compositions at this time were chiefly poetic. She composed several interesting odes, which were eagerly sought after by her friends; but her 'Sacred Dramas' almost solely occupied her attention.

As the spring advanced, we find her again accompanying Mrs. Garrick to parties of pleasure in the higher circles; but her visits were less frequent than formerly, and where only amusement was likely to be found, she absented herself if possible. But if the society promised to be intellectual, and the conversation edifying, even though religion might have no chance of being introduced, she was not unwilling occasionally to visit. Her attachment to mere worldly society, however, though it might be intellectual, was daily diminishing. The serious impression made on her mind, which many of her former worldly associates had attributed to the death of Garrick, and which they had imagined would subside as certainly, if not so quickly, in her case as it had in theirs, they saw was gradually becoming deeper and more permanent. Like good seed sown in good ground, it had brought forth fruit to the glory of God; proving itself to be essentially different to that sorrow which the most hardened often feel at the death of a relative or friend, and which, as it leaves the heart unimpressed, speedily passes away. The

sorrow of the world, and godly sorrow, produce totally different effects.

About this time, Mrs. Boscawen, who was on terms of close intimacy with Miss More, and who was accustomed to forward to her any new publications that she thought deserving attention, sent her 'Cardiphonia.' A more suitable work could hardly have been selected. With its simple, yet accurate delineations of experimental piety, she was delighted; and it evidently gave her a clearer insight into the feelings characteristic of the truly pious, than she had before attained. "I like it," she says, "prodigiously; it is full of vital, experimental religion. I thought the first three letters the best; but I have not yet read them all."

These unequivocal proofs of Miss More's increasing piety were in the highest degree gratifying to her relatives, who had always been apprehensive that the attractions of worldly gaiety would, as was almost invariably their effect, render her perfectly indifferent to the claims of religion. Her parents, especially, were delighted to find that such was not the case. Her father, who was now in his eighty-first year, wrote her a pleasing poetic letter, expressive of the deep concern he had felt for her welfare, and of the pleasure he derived from her growing piety. In a letter to her sister she says: "Tell my father that I am quite delighted with his verses, and particularly that he could write them with so good a hand. I do not think that I shall write such verses at eighty-one."

In June, 1781, Miss More returned to Bristol, accompanied, on this occasion, by Mrs. Garrick, whom she had persuaded to pay her family a short visit. At the end of a month, that lady returned to Hampton; but Miss More remained till near the close of the year, actively engaged in adding to the stores of her own mind, and imparting knowledge to

some young pupils, many of whom were the daughters of most respectable families.

In the autumn, an incident occurred which called forth her benevolent exertions in aid of a young female, apparently of German extraction, of a delicate figure and most prepossessing appearance, who was found sitting under a hay-stack, a short distance from Bristol. By her manners, she seemed to have been genteelly brought up; but though the utmost efforts were used, no information could be elicited whence she came. She repaired to the cottagers in the neighbourhood, to solicit the gift of a little milk, which was readily given her, and which she gratefully received, when she again returned to her place under the hay-stack, where she would sit for hours. She could not be persuaded to enter a house, because, she said, *men* were there. At length her unhappy situation was made known to Miss More, who took a lively interest in her case. She employed every means to elicit from her some fragments of her history, but without effect. The mental malady of the unfortunate female had rendered her nearly incapable of speech, so that, though she could hear, she could scarcely articulate any language so as to be understood. Miss More commenced a subscription for her benefit, and succeeded in raising a sufficient sum to place her in a comfortable asylum near Bristol. Subsequently she was removed to Guy's hospital, where she died; but no tidings whence she came were ever obtained.

In the following December, (1781,) Miss More again quitted Bristol, to become Mrs. Garrick's companion through the winter. On her arrival in London, a circumstance occurred which roused into increased energy her serious impressions, and augmented considerably her disrelish for worldly pursuits. This was the sudden death of an infidel, whom she had often met. She had frequently heard

him declare, that at death, he knew he should be as if he had never been. His infidelity, however, afforded him no comfort. He was unable to stifle the voice of conscience; he was always terrified at the thought of death. Thus it always is with the sceptic; he vainly boasts of his belief in annihilation, yet he can place no confidence in his creed: at the first approach of death he begins to tremble. Infidelity can boast only when no danger is near; Christianity can triumph while nature sickens and dies.

In February, 1782, Miss More published, in one volume, her 'Sacred Dramas,' and an epistolary poem, entitled 'Sensibility.' She inscribed the volume to the Duchess of Beaufort. The work was well received, and had an extensive sale. It was designed chiefly for the young, whom it was well calculated to interest and instruct; but it may be doubted whether dramatic compositions can ever render the simple narratives of Scripture more interesting than they are in themselves. There is something in them so inimitably touching, that they seem to suffer from the most laboured attempts of human effort to give them increasing interest. Is not this a proof of their divinely-inspired origin?

It was evident that during the composition of this volume, Miss More's piety was becoming more deep and decided. Her views of the great leading points of Christianity were obviously expanding. The importance of salvation by faith in the Redeemer's atonement, and the impossibility of obtaining it in any other way, were seen by her in a clearer light, and regarded with increasing interest. But she was still so circumstanced as to render it extremely difficult not to mix with the fashionable world much more than was to her agreeable. She was at this time apprehensive that the pious tone of her volume would lead its readers to form a higher opinion of

her Christian character, than the humbling views she now had of herself would allow to be just. Nor was she without her fears that the statements contained in her volume, and its general tendency, might subject her to the charge of inconsistency, for her occasional mixture with the world. Nothing was clearer than that she was now earnestly seeking to release herself entirely from these entanglements. But she was laudably anxious to do it in a way the least offensive to her associates. If any proof were wanting of Miss More's growing piety, the deep-seated humility of which she was now the subject, would sufficiently establish the fact. A more certain characteristic of genuine piety than lowliness of mind, cannot be found. The first lesson the Christian convert learns, is to form a mean opinion of himself. This is the natural result of that discovery of depravity in his heart which every sincere Christian is led to make. Looking into himself he sees so much guilt and imperfection that he may well be apprehensive lest others should think of him too well. Hence the uniform opinion of the pious is, that each thinks himself the most unworthy object of the Divine favour. In the case of many excellent individuals, these opinions are ill founded ; in no instance were they more so than in reference to Miss More.

CHAPTER III.

Visit to Bath—Eager pursuit of Christian knowledge—Her Remarks on different writers—Reflections on the loss of a literary friend—Interesting interview with Dr. Johnson—Concern for the Abolition of Negro Slavery—Visit to Dr. Kennicott—Increasing seriousness of mind—Commencement of her intimacy with Bishop Porteus—Visit to Dr. Kennicott in his last illness—His death—Remarks on his character—Interesting anecdote respecting him.

For the benefit of her health, which was still delicate, Miss More repaired, towards the close of the winter of 1782, to Bath, whither she was accompanied by Mrs. Garrick. But, though her health was improved by the change, yet in other respects the visit afforded her no pleasure; and having no taste for trifling amusements, she quitted it as the spring advanced.

It was still her prevalent desire to obtain Scriptural knowledge: this she wisely regarded as, of all acquisitions, the most important. Hence she continued a diligent reader of the sacred volume, and of all its most approved explanatory writers. To this commendable practice may be ascribed that happy illustration and most apposite quotation of Scripture, which subsequently formed a prominent feature in her productions. With Bishop Lowth's expository works she was much interested; and though she thought them less devotional than might

have been wished—suited more for the critical than for the devout reader—yet she found them most instructive.

So desirous was Miss More to acquire comprehensive views of the Christian system, that she read nearly all the works of our best theologians. In one of her letters at this time she says, playfully, "I am up to my ears in books." Ample proof is given, in her correspondence, that she read with discrimination and judgment. Her remarks upon each writer were usually pertinent and just. To works illustrative of experimental piety she gave a decided preference; hence she valued Newton's 'Cardiphonia,' far beyond the productions of more erudite authors. Elegant compositions on the great subjects of religion, much as they pleased her taste, if they touched not the heart, she prized but little. Mere moral disquisitions, however eloquent, if not founded upon Christian principles, she thought of no value. Jorton's Sermons, which she had then been reading, she says, "are cold and low in doctrine."

Next to theology, history was her favourite study. Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall,' she now appears to have read carefully for the first time. His merits as a writer she much overrated; but she censured, with just severity, his malignant and insidious attack on Christianity.

Miss More still continued on terms of close intimacy with nearly all who made any literary pretensions; and though she wished to withdraw from the world, yet the extensive and highly respectable circle of her acquaintance, which rather increased than diminished, rendered this extremely difficult to effect. She still felt compelled to visit the ball-room occasionally, but she did it invariably with increasing dislike.

In April of this year, (1782,) she was called to mourn the loss, under circumstances peculiarly affecting, of her esteemed literary friend, the late

J. Chamberlayne, Esq., whom she had highly respected, and with whom she had often had the pleasure to converse on literary subjects. He had been persuaded, by the urgent entreaties of his friends, much against his own inclination, to accept an important office in the Treasury. Though perfectly able to perform its duties, he could never think himself so. The result was a serious attack of nervous depression, under the pressure of which he threw himself from the Treasury windows, and survived only a few hours. He sank under the weight of duties which he could have discharged for another, with all the ease imaginable, but the responsibilities of which he could not himself sustain. Some may ascribe this to mental weakness, but it was owing rather to excessive sensibility. It is commendable always to feel a proper degree of confidence; nothing can be well done without it: excessive timidity ought, equally with presumptuous and daring self-dependence, to be invariably discouraged. Those, however, who, notwithstanding all their efforts, are tortured under the withering influence of an overwrought sensibility, till existence itself becomes intolerable, must not be hastily condemned. "Judge not, that ye be not judged," is the wise admonition of Scripture. We are all the creatures of frailty and imperfection: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall."

Nearly at the same time that Miss More heard of the above melancholy event, she was apprized of the death of the amiable and pious Mrs. Smith, one of her most intimate friends. These events, with the declining health of some others, for whom she felt the highest regard, and whom she saw were gradually descending into the land whence no traveller returns, loosened her affection from the world, and gave to her mind a turn more decidedly serious.

Among the friends whose declining health she

regretted the most deeply, was that of Dr. Johnson, whom she frequently met, and whom she venerated, not only for his eminent learning, but more especially for the high regard he had always maintained, in all companies and under all circumstances, for religion. "Poor Johnson," she writes, "is in a bad state of health: I fear his constitution is breaking up. I am quite grieved at it; he will not leave an abler defender of religion and virtue behind him."

The abolition of negro slavery had about this time become, through the humane and most indefatigable exertions of Clarkson, Wilberforce, and others, a subject of general remark. Individuals of all classes took a lively interest in its discussion. Miss More felt the deepest concern for its success, and ultimately employed her pen in its behalf.

In June, 1782, Miss More paid another visit to her friend Dr. Kennicott. Dr. Johnson was then at Oxford, probably for the benefit of his health, which continued in a sad declining state. The doctor related to her, at one of their meetings, in a way peculiar to himself, many early incidents of his college life. During her stay at Oxford she spent a day or two most happily with Johnson, at Dr. Barrington's, the Bishop of Landaff. Henderson, and several other eminent literary characters were present, and the learned doctor seemed for a time to forget his infirmities.

She proceeded to Bristol in July, and resumed with undiminished activity her scholastic duties; still, however, devoting herself most closely to her literary pursuits. In the autumn, several distinguished individuals paid her a visit; Mrs. Montagu spent a few days with her, much to the satisfaction of both parties. The meeting of such kindred minds must have been highly interesting. They were alike devotedly attached to literature. Their talents, if not of equal eminence, were both distinguished; and each was

anxious to employ them more for the good of mankind, than for her own gratification or self-advancement.

In December Miss More again became Mrs. Garrick's companion, and, as before, they spent the winter at Hampton. She had been there little more than a month, when she received intelligence of the death of her father, to whom she had always been strongly attached, and who, it appears, had been rather suddenly taken off. He had attained a great age, and retained his faculties to the last; and though his loss was deeply regretted by his family, yet they had not to sorrow as those without hope.

The death of an aged parent, one to whom we looked for support in our early days, who sustained us when we were feeble, instructed us when we were ignorant; who has been the prop of our youth and the guide of our life; who has always taken the liveliest interest in our welfare, and given us the soundest advice in all our difficulties, is an important event at any time of life. In minds of the firmest texture it frequently excites the most serious reflections: the truly pious regard it always with deep solemnity. Even when the departed relative is evidently prepared for the change, perhaps waiting for it with holy anticipation, having a desire to depart, to whom the change could not be otherwise than glorious, it is not to be contemplated with indifference. Religion does not forbid us to feel, though it checks immoderate grief and prohibits despair. The death of her father, though it could not have been unlooked for, had evidently rendered the serious impressions excited in Miss More's mind, by former bereavements, more indelible. For three weeks she could not be persuaded to leave her room. It was probably during this season of solitude that she resolved never again to attend the theatre, which several of her friends had urged her to do; she had een enough of it, though she saw it under the

most favourable aspect, to convince her, notwithstanding all the ingenuity and eloquence employed by its advocates, that its evils were great and serious; while its benefits, if it conferred any, were few and trifling. She now saw the extreme folly of making it even a stepping-stone to mental pursuits. The operation of the little leaven hidden in her heart by the Divine Spirit, was visible in her entire abandonment of a course that had proved ruinous to many, though in her case its evils had been happily counteracted. The results of these impressions were daily becoming more apparent:—her desire was, to avoid conformity to practices which, though they might not lead to evil in her own case, would almost inevitably be productive of it in the case of others. Genuine piety will always, more or less, have this effect. It is self-deception to imagine that we may retain our religion, and yet engage in practices that may lead to the certain ruin of thousands, though they may not perhaps prove in any remarkable degree injurious to ourselves. The religion that will permit its possessor to pursue a course like this, may pass current in the world, but it will yield no peace to the conscience. Christianity not only requires us to abstain from evil, but from all appearance of it. The question with every one ought to be, not whether the course he may be urged to pursue will be detrimental to his own piety, but whether it will not tend to the ruin of his associates. The change produced on Miss More's mind had precisely this effect.

Associated as Miss More was, frequently, with individuals whose chief pleasure consisted in worldly amusements, and whose entreaties to join them were urged with affectionate importunity, it was no easy task always to give a denial; yet she had the firmness to do so in all cases, from this time, when she was solicited to attend the theatre. "I refused,"

she says, "to accompany Lady Spencer to hear Mrs. Siddons, though her ladyship took the pains yesterday to come and solicit me."

In March, 1783, Miss More again accompanied Mrs. Garrick to London, where they resided till near the end of May. On this occasion she was sometimes prevailed upon to meet parties of pleasure among the highest circles, but it was always with reluctance, and to avoid giving offence. Without assuming needless singularity, she had the courage to be singular when the interests of piety seemed to require it.

The bias of her mind was now decidedly spiritual: all her associates perceived the difference, not in her conduct, which had never been improper, but in the leading tendency of her mind, as developed in the subjects she selected for study, and the company that gave her most pleasure. She had the same ardent thirst after knowledge, and the same earnest desire to enrich her mind, but her object was different. Individuals who were pious as well as learned were her favourite associates. Erudition without piety was insufficient to secure her esteem.

It was not to be expected that a course like this could be approved by those whose practices it tacitly condemned. By a few kindred spirits, who were somewhat less decided, it was regarded in its true light. Others, whose minds were unenlightened, respected her motives;—they could hardly do otherwise, such was her simplicity and sincerity, while they disapproved of her conduct. A few censured her as punctilious, tauntingly upbraiding her with the epithets usually employed in derision of the pious. This she resented not, but rather pitied those who resorted to it. "A visitor has just gone away," she writes to her sister, "quite chagrined that I am such a rigid Methodist, that I cannot come to her assembly on Sunday, though she protests, with great

apparent piety, that she never has cards, and that it is quite savage in me to think there can be any harm in a little agreeable music!"

Happily for Miss More she met not with much of this persecuting spirit; and what she did meet with was more than counterbalanced, not only by the inward satisfaction she enjoyed in the path of safety, but by the augmented esteem which she could not fail to discover was felt for her, by those whose good opinion was the most highly to be valued. Dr. Johnson was delighted to find that her talents were likely to be devoted exclusively to the cause of piety. The evening shadows were now gathering around the doctor, and his sun was soon to set; but his mind was still unimpaired. He had seen much of life. He well knew what was to be expected from the world; its utter inability to yield to the mind, in any case, more especially in seasons of affliction, any degree of satisfaction. He had always been the advocate and friend of revelation, and had never failed nobly to defend it against the sneers of individuals, however distinguished their characters. He had frequently regretted that so many men of talent were to be found in the ranks of infidelity; a circumstance which he well knew was owing more to sheer perverseness of heart, than to any want of evidence in support of the truth. The high regard he had invariably felt for religion, increased with his years, and he was delighted to see so popular a writer as Miss More had already proved herself to be, decidedly ranking herself among its friends. That he had formerly viewed her situation as perilous, may be inferred from many friendly admonitions he had given her; and now that he saw her escape from the snare, and nobly take her stand on the side of truth, it afforded him the greatest pleasure. There was no individual whose favourable opinion Miss More was

so anxious to possess, nor of whose regard she might more justly be proud.

Miss More left London with Mrs. Garrick, the last week in May, 1783, to spend a few weeks with her in their charming retreat at Hampton. In June she returned to Bristol. The growing seriousness of her mind was soon perceived by her friends there, to whom it afforded the highest satisfaction. With the same simplicity of mind, and the same ardent love of literature, they were pleased to witness a steadily increasing attachment to the sacred volume, with an augmented earnestness of mind to make all her attainments subservient to the Redeemer's cause.

To none did this circumstance afford greater pleasure than to her excellent friend Dr. Stonehouse, whose deep concern for her welfare had prompted him to give her many cautions; imagining, as he might justly do, that the course she was pursuing was one of great danger. He rejoiced to witness the fruit of his labours and prayers—her conversation, which had always been pleasing to him, was now increasingly so. He anticipated, as did most of her Bristol friends, the satisfaction of having more of her company now than they had been favoured with for many years. In this they would probably not have been disappointed, had not an incident occurred which suddenly called her away for a time. This was the affliction and death of her much-esteemed friend, Dr. Kennicott.

The very affectionate manner in which Miss More had discharged the task of consoling the mind of Mrs. Garrick, under her sudden bereavement, was admired by all, but by none more than by Dr. and Mrs. Kennicott. This, with the close intimacy that now subsisted between her and the doctor's family, pointed her out to Mrs. Kennicott as a most suitable companion, immediately on the doctor's sudden and

alarming attack. She accordingly wrote Miss More a pressing invitation to pay her a visit under these afflicting circumstances. Ever ready to soothe and comfort the afflicted, Miss More complied instantly with this request. She set off for Oxford towards the end of June, and on her arrival found the doctor in a state so alarmingly critical, that scarcely the slightest hopes were entertained of his recovery. The disease baffled every effort made to subdue it. He sank under it in little more than a fortnight. The pain he endured was intense, but he complained not. His attachment to Mrs. Kennicott was unusually strong, as was hers to him. Hence she felt the separating stroke the more keenly. On Miss More devolved, instrumentally, the arduous task of consoling her mind. Into better hands it could hardly have fallen, and she performed it with the utmost possible affection and kindness.

At the earnest request of Mrs. Kennicott, Miss More attended the doctor's funeral. She describes the choir-service as almost insupportably awful. On retiring from the affecting scene she exclaimed, "Thus closed a life, the last thirty years of which were honourably spent in collating the Hebrew Scriptures."

The result of this learned and excellent doctor's investigation of the fidelity of our authorized translation of the Scriptures, is most satisfactory and interesting to British Christians; and ought to excite, in the hearts of all, unfeigned gratitude to God for the efficient aid he gave to the holy men by whom it was translated.

Miss More mentions an interesting anecdote respecting the doctor, which, though it has been repeatedly told, well deserves to be again recorded, so happily does it illustrate the excellence of our common translation of the Scriptures. "When the doctor presented his work to George III., the king

asked him, 'What, upon the whole, had been the result of his very laborious and learned investigations?' 'May it please your majesty,' was the doctor's memorable reply, 'I have found some grammatical errors, and several variations in different texts; but not one which in the smallest degree affected any article of faith or practice.'"

Miss More drew up a sketch of the doctor's character, which, though hastily, was ably written. This indefatigable scholar, to whom the lovers of sacred criticism are under lasting obligations, was born at Totness in Devonshire, in 1718. In 1744, he entered Wadham College, Oxford. He first distinguished himself by two masterly dissertations 'On the Tree of Life,' and 'On the Oblation of Cain and Abel,' a work which laid the foundation of his subsequent elevation; procuring him from the University the honour, gratuitously bestowed, of a Bachelor's degree, which was the more to be valued, as it was conferred a year before the statuable period. He was subsequently a successful candidate for a fellowship of Exeter College. In 1753, by the publication of his first dissertation 'On the State of the Printed Hebrew Text,' he laid the basis of that stupendous work which will hand down to posterity his name with immortal honour, and which closely employed his time till near the close of a long life. This excellent divine was as much distinguished for his moral as for his intellectual qualities. His whole life was consecrated to the noblest of purposes, the elucidation of the sacred volume. "He was," says Miss More, "scrupulously conscientious. The most minute exactness, the strictest love of order, and the closest habits of accuracy, distinguished the smaller, no less than the greater parts of his life. Pain could not subdue, nor prosperity weaken his principles. The severe studies and the intense sufferings which almost divided his life between them, could never re-

lapse the gaiety of his temper, or shade the mournful cast of his mind."

The following interesting anecdote illustrates the depth of his piety, and the high regard he felt for the Scriptures. The doctor always estimated very highly Mrs. Kennicott's judgment, and while employed in his great work she constantly read to him, at his request, in their daily airings, that portion of Scripture which he had then under his notice. While preparing for their ride the day after he had finished his arduous undertaking, Mrs. Kennicott asked him what book they should take with them; "O," exclaimed he, "let us again begin the Bible!" How pleasing a testimony to the value of the Scriptures! This holy man had devoted the powers of his capacious mind to their critical investigation during the greater part of his long life, yet he still gave it the preference to every other book: he had doubtless found it what it will ever be found by the patient, pious, persevering student, an inexhaustible source of divine knowledge; a spring, ever bubbling up, whence issue the pure streams of the water of life. Like one of the Holy penmen, he could doubtless have said, "O, how I love thy law, it is my meditation day and night! Thy statutes have I taken as an heritage for ever, they are the rejoicing of my heart." Thus will it invariably be with all who devoutly attach themselves to the sacred volume: the more carefully and constantly it is studied, the brighter will its beauties shine, and the greater will be the consolation it will afford. The wealth of this mine is inexhaustible: the deeper we dig, the richer will be the ore we shall find.

Miss More removed with Mrs. Kennicott, who bore her great loss with Christian resignation, about a fortnight after the doctor's decease, when she returned to Bristol, deeply regretting the doctor's de-

cease, and having her mind powerfully impressed with the instability of all human attachments, and the paramount importance of real religion to prepare us for the loss of our friends, and to support us under it. Wretched indeed must the individual be, under the loss of pious friends, who cannot hope to meet them again in a brighter and a purer state, where the inhabitants shall no more say they are sick, and where death will be for ever unknown.

CHAPTER IV.

'Bas Bleu'—Revisits London—Increasing dislike to worldly company—Is elected a member of the French Academy of Science—Excursion in Kent—Visit to Oxford—Tour through Somersetshire—Return to Bristol—Benevolent exertions on behalf of Ann Yearsley.

In the summer of 1784, on her return to Bristol, after the death of Dr. Kennicott, Miss More composed a short but interesting poem, entitled 'Bas Bleu:' it was appropriately addressed to Mrs. Vesey, who had, a few years previously, established at her house in London a literary society, similar to the celebrated one formed by Dr. Johnson at the Turk's Head, but more select. The lovers of literature of established reputation, of either sex, were admitted. And, that all who attended might hear and be heard, the members were required to form themselves into a circle, one being seated in the centre as president.

Among the gentlemen who usually attended, was the learned and scientific, but somewhat eccentric, Mr. Stillingfleet, who always came with blue stockings. From this circumstance the society was designated, whether opprobriously or otherwise, does not appear, 'The Blue Stocking Club;' a cognomen, which an intelligent foreigner of distinction, by mistake, translated literally 'Bas Bleu.' To this circumstance the poem owed its birth and its name. Her object in composing it, was to exculpate the so-

ciety from some aspersions attempted to be cast upon it by a few ill-disposed individuals, chiefly because cards were excluded; a task which she performed most ably.

That societies of this kind, well conducted, contribute greatly to the benefit of all who attend them, none can doubt. Miss More, subsequently, thus adverts to the advantages she had derived from her personal attendance. "Most cheerfully do I bear my grateful testimony to the many pleasant and instructive hours I have had the honour to pass in this society, in which learning was as little disfigured by pedantry, good taste as little disfigured by affectation, and general conversation as little disgraced by calumny, levity, and the other censurable errors with which it is too commonly tainted, as has perhaps been known in any society."

The poem thus originated, was first sent to W. W. Pepys, Esq., afterwards Sir W. Pepys, whom she had met at Hampton, and had perceived to be a gentleman of a pure and highly cultivated taste. It was forwarded to him to have the benefit of his critical remarks, and was by him to be dispatched to Mrs. Vesey, without that lady having any knowledge who was the author. In the letter sent with the manuscript lines to Mr. Pepys, she remarks, with the humility characteristic of genuine merit, "I have been filling up my leisure hours with scribbling a parcel of idle verses, with which I hope to divert our dear Mrs. Vesey. But as I wish to puzzle her, I would not send them direct from hence, as the postmark would have been at once a *coup de lumiere*. After making such corrections on them as you may think proper, you will oblige me by despatching them to her, without the slightest intimation whence they came."

The merits of this poem were soon discovered to be considerable: all who perused it were delighted

with the beauty of its allusions, the harmony of its numbers, and the value of its statements. Dr. Johnson spoke of it in terms of warm commendation. The advantages of conversation, mental and moral, when well conducted, have never been more forcibly stated. Many excellent extracts might be made from this short poem, but we can only find room for the following lines :—

"Let education's moral mint
The noblest images imprint;
Let taste her curious touchstone hold,
To try if standard be the gold:
But 'tis thy commerce, Conversation,
Must give it us by circulation—
That noblest commerce of mankind,
Whose precious merchandize is Mind.
Range, study, think, do all you can,
Colloquial pleasures are for man.
Enlightened spirits! you who know
What charms from polish'd converse flow,
Speak, for you can, the pure delight
Which kindling sympathies unite,
When correspondent tastes impart
Communion sweet from every heart."

At Christmas, 1784, we find Miss More again domesticated with Mrs. Garrick at Hampton. Here they spent the winter. Early in the spring they removed to the Adelphi, and while there, she received many pressing invitations to parties of pleasure from families of distinction. With a few of these she complied, but declined the greater number: the state of her mind respecting them will be seen by the following remarks, made after being present at a splendid meeting. "I was present, the other night, at a great assembly, which was so hot, so crowded, and so fine, that I never passed a more dull, unpleasant evening. I am absolutely resolved to go no more to such parties: how I grudged the waste of time!"

Miss More's aversion to these recreations was not singular: the wise and the pious have always, in some degree, felt the same, and we cannot help citing the following remarks from a familiar letter of a kin-

dred spirit, the late excellent Bishop Jebb :—" It is the character of proper recreations, that they recruit the mind and the body for renewed application to the serious business of life. Now I am sure you will agree with me, that what the world calls recreation is not of this nature: it is a drudgery of the most wearying and goading kind; it deadens the faculties, it discomposes the mind, and injures the body. I can hardly recollect having been ever in a crowded assembly without experiencing its prejudicial effects; without finding myself more or less unfitted for pursuing my duties that night in prayer, and the next day either in business or devotion. This may not happen to other persons, but where it is the case, I am sure that pleasures of this kind cannot be innocently, I will not say enjoyed, but participated."

In March, Miss More gladly accepted an invitation from Lady Spencer, to escape from the bustle of London, and to spend a few weeks with her at Holywell-house near St. Albans. This visit she much enjoyed, and it proved beneficial to her health. She was delighted with the simple, unceremonious regularity of Lady Spencer's establishment, and with the very pleasing proofs she saw of her ladyship's piety.

On her return to London, she remained with Mrs. Garrick till Midsummer, when she proceeded to Bristol. Shortly after her arrival, she had the honour to receive from the president of the French Academy of Science a most handsome letter, informing her that they had elected her a member of their society, as a testimony of the high regard they had entertained for her talents, an honour which she duly appreciated, and in her reply to the president's letter, gratefully acknowledged. Scarcely had she forwarded this answer, when she was seized with a severe attack of illness, which confined her to her room for several days; a visitation which she re-

garded as a providential intimation not to overrate the value of earthly applause.

To recruit her health she complied, as soon as her strength would permit, with the kind invitations of some distinguished individuals, to pay them a visit. She passed a fortnight most pleasantly at Thames Ditton, and spent some time happily at the delightful villages of Teston and Hurton. At the latter she visited her sincere friend, Bishop Porteus, whose conversation she enjoyed exceedingly.

She then proceeded to Oxford, where she expected to have met Dr. Johnson; but, to her regret, she learned that an unforeseen event had occurred to call him away the day before she arrived. The doctor was then suffering under that nervous depression which he had been subject to, more or less, all his days, and which increased upon him towards the close of life. It was her intention to have made an effort to soothe his mind.

Finding her health improved by her excursion, she went in the autumn on a tour through Somersetshire, and was charmed with the beautiful views in that county, which she described in her letters with the pen of a poet and the enthusiasm of an ardent admirer; giving proof, at the same time, incidentally, how susceptible her mind was of impressions from every object she beheld, and how carefully she watched the impressions made upon it.

On Miss More's return to Bristol, a circumstance occurred, which called into exercise her benevolent exertions on behalf of a poor milk-woman, who possessed poetic talents of no mean order. Some verses of this woman's composition were presented to Miss More, which, though incorrectly spelt, and in other respects imperfect, were nevertheless such as she thought might be made the means of raising the writer from her poverty, to a situation of comfort and respectability. She accordingly, without delay,

made more particular inquiries respecting her. She paid her a visit, and regretted to find her so miserably poor, that she was scarcely able to obtain food and clothing for herself and children, and yet apparently possessing unfeigned piety; though, from her subsequent conduct to her kind, disinterested benefactress, her piety was much to be questioned.

Miss More made immediate efforts to raise this woman from her poverty, by putting her in a way to employ her talents to some advantage. She gave her some lessons in orthography, and in such other points as she thought desirable. She corrected the more palpable errors in her productions, and at her own risk and expense had them printed. She wrote letters to all her friends, to solicit contributions on her behalf. So extraordinary were her exertions, that she declared she had written more than a thousand letters to promote her benevolent object.

This poor woman had received no education, except having been taught to write, by her brother. Her mother appears to have been pious, and to have taken some pains to give her religious instruction. On inquiring what poetry she had read, Miss More was surprised to learn that she had scarcely read any except Young's ' Night Thoughts,' Milton's ' Paradise Lost,' and a few of Shakspeare's plays. But she had read the Bible much, and apparently to excellent advantage.

The study of the Scriptures as literary compositions merely, has never yet been duly appreciated; though the Bible has been shown, by men eminently distinguished for learning and piety, to be in this respect far superior to all other books. There is, in the sacred writers, a grasp of thought, a magnificence of conception, and a noble simplicity, which we seek for in vain in the same degree elsewhere.

Apart, therefore, from a consideration of their inspiration, they merit the highest regard, and will ever fill the minds of those who attentively study them with the noblest sentiments. But it is an affecting thought, that their beauty as literary compositions may be admired, and so much of their spirit caught, as to inspire the soul with a glow of poetic feeling the most intense, while the heart may remain unaffected and the conduct unaltered. Painful as is the admission, it is a fact too often confirmed, that the knowledge of Christianity as a system, and the practice of holy duties in a course of active piety, do not co-exist necessarily. Such, unhappily, there is too much reason to fear, was the case with the poetic milk-woman.

The depravity of the human heart, and the ease with which individuals, who by diligent study have acquired a knowledge of the Scriptures, can assume the appearance of piety, with the powerful inducements which the needy must always feel so to do, when they are likely thereby the more effectually to secure the aid of the benevolent, should always make us cautious not to place too much confidence in the semblance of piety in persons so situated. Inattention to this, is chiefly the reason why so much imposition has been so successfully practised upon the kind and benevolent, a circumstance which has often proved seriously detrimental to the interests of the really poor and needy.

Fraud is invariably more easily practised upon persons of an open, amiable, unsuspicious mind. None could be more so than Miss More, and it was owing to this that she too readily and too implicitly placed confidence in the milk-woman's pretensions to piety. Whether Mrs. Montagu, who had seen more of the world, concluded that Miss More had been too credulous of the woman's statements we cannot tell, but from the following remarks in one of

her letters it would seem to have been the case : " I am charmed," she writes to Miss More, " with your account of the poetical milk-woman, and beg of you to inform yourself as much as you can of her temper and disposition and moral character. I speak not this out of any apprehension of wasting a few guineas, but lest I should do harm where I intend to do good. It has sometimes happened to me, that by an endeavour to encourage talents and to cherish virtue among the poor, by driving from them the terrifying spectre of pale poverty, I have introduced a legion of little demons : vanity, luxury, ignorance, pride, have entered the cottage the moment poverty vanished."

The persevering efforts made by Miss More to befriend this poor woman were most disinterested, and reflected the highest honour on her benevolence. The success of her exertions far exceeded her most sanguine expectations. The sum of £600 was raised for her relief. This sum was placed at the disposal of a committee chosen for the purpose, to be applied to her use in the way they deemed most advisable. Unhappily the result fully justified Mrs. Montagu's cautionary remarks, and verified the following almost prophetic observation made in a Review at the time :— " Possibly," said the writer, in reply to the encomiums lavished on the woman's character, " a sufficient trial has not yet been made of the real disposition of this poetess. The moral qualities of her mind can only be known when she has felt the influence of public favour ; and from her behaviour in that decent and comfortable situation, in which she acknowledges she has been placed by the interest of those who have so warmly exerted themselves to rescue her from the obscurity and penury of her former state, we may discover how far gratitude and humility may be reckoned among the other virtues of her character.

The conduct of Ann Yearsley, the milk-woman, soon proved that these remarks were not uncalled for. No sooner was she informed of the amount raised for her, than she became elated with pride. She even employed the bitterest expressions of resentment against Miss More, for representing her, in the preface to the volume of poems published for her benefit, as an object of charity. And because Miss More very properly resisted her importunity to have the money collected placed under her controul, she basely insinuated that Miss More retained possession of it for her own use. She even dared to assert, that the blemishes there were in her poems, were chiefly owing to the alterations made in them by her benefactress.

Miss More's conduct under this base treatment, so entirely unprovoked, from one whom she had done so much to serve, from motives the most kind and disinterested, and from whom she had a right to expect, at least the return of very grateful acknowledgements, did her the highest honour. Like a true disciple of the lowly Jesus, when reviled she reviled not again; she did not even take the trouble to contradict the calumnies asserted and circulated by her unprincipled protége. Conscious of her innocence, she regarded not the malignant efforts made by her opponent to traduce her character, but left her mad assertions to refute themselves, while she pitied the individual by whom they had been fabricated.

Talent struggling with poverty ought always to excite our compassion; but it is not, in all cases, wise to elevate individuals above the stations in which Providence has placed them. So much are we the creatures of circumstances, that it is impossible to tell, with certainty, what effect either the sudden reverse of fortune, or the contrary, is likely to produce. Immediate depression from wealth to poverty, salutary as it sometimes proves, is occasionally mo-

rally injurious even to the best disposed; but a rapid elevation from obscurity to eminence, often becomes totally ruinous. Where pride is the dominant principle, as was the case with Ann Yearsley, its results are sure to be pernicious. Pride is the besetting vice of man, none can calculate the mischief it produces. It is utterly destructive of every kind and virtuous principle, and ruinous to the spiritual interests of all who live in its indulgence.

The base treatment which Miss More received from one making pretensions to piety, would have acted injuriously upon some minds, leading them to suspect that all who profess religion are insincere; an assertion which the inconsistency of its professors has too often led its opponents to make, more to the injury of religion, than all the attacks of infidelity. Happily, it had not this effect on Miss More. She well knew that religion rested on the solid basis of truth, however inconsistent might be the conduct of its professors. The improprieties of others, instead of being converted by her into a pretext for neglecting religion, only served to increase her watchfulness, and to lead her to more diligent self-inspection. "I grieve most," she writes, "for poor fallen human-nature. I am persuaded that Providence intends me good by it. Had the woman turned out well, which I fondly hoped would have been the case, I should have had my *reward;* as it is, I have my *trial.* Perhaps I was too vain of my success, and in counting over the money, might be elated, and ready to say, 'Is not this great Babylon that I have builded.'"

The unprincipled conduct of the milk-woman might have furnished Miss More with a justifiable pretext for relinquishing all further exertions on her behalf; but with that true nobleness of mind which Christianity alone can teach, she says, "I shall continue to take the same care of her pecuniary interests, and

am even now engaged in bringing out a second edition of her poems. My conscience tells me that I ought not to give up my exertions for the children on account of their mother's wickedness." This was Christian magnanimity.

Her conduct in this whole affair, proves that it was now her desire to derive instruction from every event in life, painful or pleasing. She had learned to view all things as under the controul of a wise, benevolent Being, and she felt assured that he would cause them all to work together for the good of them that love and confide in him.

This led her to extract good from whatever came under her notice. Alluding to the inconsistent conduct of a talented individual that had about that time come to her knowledge, she remarks, with characteristic lowliness of mind, "I am never so effectually humbled, as in contemplating the defects of a shining character. So far am I from feeling any interior joy, that the distance between them and me seems to be lessened, that I am deeply alarmed lest those of my own actions which seem the least exceptionable, should either proceed from wrong motives, or be a cover for false principles."

The movements of her own mind, and the impression made upon it by the daily occurrences of life, she subjected to a rigid scrutiny. Aware of the possibility of self-deception, she examined her motives with a holy jealousy. "I do assure you," she says, "with all the truth of sincere friendship, that one of my deepest causes of uneasiness is lest I should deceive others, and especially myself, as to the motives of my own actions. It is so easy to practise a creditable degree of seeming virtue, and so difficult to purify and direct the affections of the heart, that I feel myself in continual danger of appearing better than I am; and I verily believe it possible to make one's whole life a display of splendid

and agreeable qualities, without ever setting one's foot towards the narrow path, or even one's face towards the strait gate."

That any occasion existed for this self-suspicion, beyond what the most enlightened and virtuous mind will always feel, is abundantly evident. An individual more open and sincere than Hannah More, never existed. There was not the least semblance in her conduct, of duplicity; she sought not to make herself *appear* virtuous, but to *be* so. Her heart had been opened, and her mind enlightened by Divine grace. She felt herself to be the subject of depravity and guilt. This led, as it will always do, to deep inward self-inspection. Knowing that the Divine law requires purity of heart and thought, as well as consistency of conduct, she scrutinized her actions and the movements of her mind; far different from those who, in forming their estimate of character, regard only the general deportment, and conclude themselves faultless when that is genenerally correct.

CHAPTER V.

Again visits Mrs. Garrick—Death of Dr. Johnson—Return to Bristol—Purchase of Cowslip Green—Revisits London —Increasing Piety—Christian watchfulness—Remarks on Cowper's Poems—Desires to be useful—Removes to Cowslip Green—Publication of 'Florio,' and 'Bas Bleu'—Revisits Mrs. Garrick—Increasing aversion to worldly company.

In December, 1784, we find Miss More again at Hampton, paying her annual visit to Mrs. Garrick. She had been there but a short time when she heard that Dr. Johnson had suffered so severe an attack of illness that no hopes were entertained of his recovery. Aware that the doctor had always trembled at the idea of dying, she was anxious to know the state of his mind as he approached the final change; and she had the satisfaction to be assured, by one of the doctor's most intimate friends, that much of the dread he had anticipated had been removed, and that his conversation was solemn and very impressive. "How delighted should I be," she remarked, "to hear the conversation of this great and good man, now that his faith has subdued his fears!" Not less delighted, there is reason to believe, would the dying doctor have been with Miss More's conversation, especially now that her views had become spiritual, and her deportment decidedly serious.

It was in the highest degree gratifying to Miss More, to learn from an individual well able to authenticate the fact, that a change of a decidedly religious character took place in the doctor's mind

some days previous to his decease, followed by the happiest results in his experience and dying testimony. His views of some essential truths of the Christian system had always been superficial, if not positively erroneous. Though he was a firm believer in the gospel, yet he saw not the full extent of its import. The piety he had advocated consisted almost solely in obedience to moral precepts. His system of religion, if system it can be called, had no foundation on which to rest, hence it afforded no support; it had nothing in fact on which he could lean. Practical duties he ever seemed to regard as the *sine qua non* in religion. The great principles of faith and love, on which so much stress is laid in the Christian system, which alone can insure consistency of conduct, he regarded not. He seemed not to be aware that Christian piety could only proceed from an enlightened mind and a renewed heart. But in the near prospect of eternity, he found that the foundation on which he had been endeavouring to rest, and to which he seems to have clung with fond tenacity, was most unsubstantial. Alarmed at his insecurity and danger, he earnestly desired the advice of some eminently pious friends, whom he knew were well able to give it. At his request an invitation was given to the pious Mr. Winstanly to call on him; but that gentleman was suffering under so much indisposition at the time, that he was unable to attend. He, however, wrote the doctor a letter, in which he remarks, "I can easily conceive that your views of yourself have changed with your condition, and that, in the near approach of death, what you once considered mere peccadilloes have risen into mountains of guilt; while your best actions have dwindled into nothing. On whatever side you look you see only positive transgression, or defective obedience, and hence, in self despair, you are eagerly enquiring

'What shall I do to be saved.' In the language of the Baptist allow me to say 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.'"

On hearing this read the doctor exclaimed, "Does he say so? Read his letter again." This being done, the pressure on his mind was in some degree removed, and he expressed an earnest wish to see Mr. W——. Partly, however, from indisposition, and partly from an undue, though excusable apprehension of not being able to say all he wished, in the presence of the learned doctor, he still declined a personal interview; but he wrote the doctor a second letter, in which he entered more fully into the essential points of the Christian system, showing that salvation could only be obtained by faith in a crucified Redeemer. This letter, with the conversation which the doctor had with the late intelligent and pious Mr. Latrobe, and with Mr. Brocklesby, led, with the Divine blessing, to an entire change in the doctor's views. The burden, which he had found so intolerable, was removed, and he enjoyed peace. In a prayer, composed a day or two afterwards, he heartily thanked God for the change he had experienced, ascribing it entirely to the power of his grace, and when the hour of his departure came, he died in peace.

The closing scene of this great man's life is truly instructing. It shows us the utter inutility of the profoundest knowledge, without the grace of God, to save the soul. On its being intimated to him that he might dismiss his fears, because he had done so much, by his writings, in the cause of piety, he remarked, "I have indeed written piously, but I have lived too much like other men. Believe a dying man. There is no salvation but in the sacrifice of the Son of God." In his will, made shortly before his death, after the usual commencing terms, he

thus writes, " I offer up my soul to the great and merciful God : I offer it full of pollution, but in full assurance that it will be cleansed through the blood of the Redeemer." Thus strikingly did he bear his dying testimony to the great leading points in the Christian religion—the depravity of man, and his consequent exposure to condemnation, and the impossibility of his obtaining redemption and renovation, in any other way than by faith in the one great atoning sacrifice. " No action of his life," says Miss More, " became him so much as the delightful manner in which he set his dying seal to the truth of Christianity."

We have thus particularly narrated the doctor's dying experience, not only to illustrate the power of divine grace, but because attempts have been made to prove that his mind underwent no alteration. It is, however, most satisfactory, to know that the veracity of the doctor's dying testimonial cannot be shaken.

Among the doctor's survivors, none rejoiced more than Miss More in his altered views : she well knew the danger to which individuals of enlarged mental capabilities were exposed, of rejecting the simple, humbling statements of the gospel, or at least of overlooking them as matters beneath their notice. She had no doubt of the doctor's firm belief in the truths of revelation generally, and of his sincere attachment to every branch of practical piety ; but she had too much reason to be apprehensive, that his perception of the great objects to be accomplished by the incarnation and death of the Redeemer, with the internal change needful to be produced in the minds of all who partake of its benefits, were exceedingly defective. Conscious, that where this was the case, the mind could find nothing on which to repose in the prospect of eternity, she felt the liveliest concern to ascertain in what way he would meet his long-

dreaded foe. Those who feel the power of Christian principles, and are really made the subjects of a Divine change, as was now evidently the case with Miss More, will always thus anxiously desire that their friends may participate with them of these great blessings.

The doctor's death deepened the serious impression already made on Miss More's mind: she had looked up to him not as a friend only, but also as a parent; and his removal, while it made a breach in her friendships not easily to be filled up, diminished greatly her attachment to the literary world. "I now recollect," she says, "with melancholy pleasure, two anecdotes of this departed genius, indicating a zeal for religion which one cannot but admire, however characteristically rough. When the Abbé Reynell was introduced to him, the doctor refused to give him his hand; and he afterwards replied to the expostulation of a friend on his conduct for so doing, "I will never shake hands with an infidel." At another time, I remember asking him if he did not think the Dean of Derry a very agreeable man. He made me no reply, and on my repeating the question, he said, "I will say nothing in favour of one who breaks the sabbath."

Previous to Johnson's death, Miss More had seriously contemplated a more entire withdrawal from the world: she wished for a retired situation, where she could employ her pen to instruct and benefit mankind; and the doctor's death had increased that desire. Even amidst the interruption to which she was often exposed in London, such was the anxiety she felt to attain religious knowledge, that she read the works of nearly all our most eminent theological writers. She was thus storing her mind with that knowledge which she subsequently employed with such admirable effect. In a letter, descriptive of her state of mind at this time, she remarks, "You know

I have always told you, that Sunday is not only my day of rest, but of enjoyment. I go twice to those churches where I expect the best preaching. Mrs. Garrick has, for my sake, kindly declined asking company on Sunday, so that I enjoy the whole day to myself. I swallow no small portion of theology of different descriptions, always making it my practice to read, when visiting, such books as I do not possess at home. After my select reading, I have attacked South, Atterbury, and Warburton. In the works of these great geniuses and original thinkers, I see many passages of Scripture presented in a striking light: but I think it right to mix their learned labours with the devout effusions of more spiritual writers—Baxter, Doddridge, Hall, Hopkins, Jeremy Taylor, and the profound Barrow. I devour much, but, I fear, digest but little.

Early in the summer of 1785, Miss More returned to Bristol. The serious impressions on her mind, notwithstanding the strong counteracting force of worldly influence, had steadily increased. She had long been seeking gradually to disentangle herself from her worldly connexions, and she now came to a determination to spend the chief of her time in retirement. To carry this purpose into effect, she purchased a small estate and cottage in the vicinity of Bristol, in a pretty spot called Cowslip Green, whither she now intended to repair. The house was fitted up for her use in the summer, and she took possession of it in the ensuing autumn, and remained in it several weeks.

But as the winter advanced, she was again affectionately urged by Mrs. Garrick to become her companion as usual for the winter, and many of her London friends earnestly entreated her to renew her visit. Gladly would she have excused herself, but she knew not how to do so without displeasing those to whom she was most strongly attached; and such

was her regard for Mrs. Garrick, and her respect for her London friends, that she could not refuse the favour they asked, though she was aware that compliance with their wishes would cost her much painful feeling, and no little loss of time. She was, however, determined by the assistance of God, to bear her testimony to the value and importance of religion—not ostentatiously or officiously, nor so as to give needless offence, but, when occasion called for it, more unequivocally than ever; and she indulged a hope that she might do this, in some cases, usefully. As Mr. Roberts well remarks, "In polished society, she never forgot her allegiance to the truth, but declared boldly, faithfully, and fearlessly, even where pomp and pleasure sometimes made it most unwelcome, those Christian principles which, in her works, she afterwards so successfully vindicated."

It was to her a subject of the deepest regret, that among her numerous friends, many of whom were most amiable and intelligent, so few seemed to regard religion as of the least importance. Here and there, she found an individual with whom she could converse freely on the subject, which was now become far dearer to her than any other; though, by the greater part of those with whom she was associated, it was thought of all others the most undesirable. Under such circumstances, it would not have been surprising had the vigour of her piety been greatly impaired. Worldly company has a most chilling effect upon religion; in its deadening atmosphere it is impossible for it long to exist. Frequent exposure to it, unnecessarily, has invariably a withering influence; many a time has it blighted and cut off the fairest and loveliest plants of Christian piety.

Fully aware of this, Miss More most anxiously guarded against it. The affecting instances that had come under her notice, of its evils, led her to

resolve that, however indifferent others might be to their spiritual interests, she would, by divine assistance, make them increasingly the object of her most earnest pursuit. Her mornings and her sabbaths she took care to secure to herself. These she employed in devotional exercises, and in reading either the Scriptures or some work on theology. She was thus prepared, with less danger, to meet her worldly friends in the evening, and was the more ready to drop some useful remark, which the deep interest she now felt in their spiritual welfare prompted her to do whenever she could. She well knew that the best security from worldly contacts, next to a simple reliance upon God, is the cultivation of a devotional spirit. This, indeed, joined with persevering and vigilant efforts to have our minds well stored with religious knowledge, will always be our best preparation for a useful course of action. The Christian whose mind is well stored with religious knowledge, and who cultivates a devotional spirit, will be ready always to repel the attacks of infidelity, and to give a suitable word of reproof to the thoughtless.

It cannot, however, be admitted that Miss More was justified in pursuing a line of conduct which she knew to be dangerous. That her motives were otherwise than good, none can for a moment suspect. Her amiable disposition induced her to yield to the solicitations of her friends, against the dictates of her enlightened mind, and she probably hoped in some respects to be useful, by bearing her testimony in favour of religion in circles where, if it was not despised, it was almost entirely disregarded. But we are never to be commended for exposing ourselves to evil, in the hope of doing good. And though, in her case, no ill effects followed, perhaps some good was done, yet, in making similar attempts, numbers have lost their piety, and found, to their cost, that in endeavouring thus to vanquish the world, they have themselves been over-

come. Be not conformed to the world, but come out from it, and be separate, is an injunction of universal obligation;—our only safe rule in our intermixture with society. Not that Christianity was intended to make man a recluse. We may mix with the world for purposes of business, and sometimes even for pleasure; but this we must never do when any ill effects are likely to follow, nor, more especially, when we feel a conviction on our mind that it is wrong. The strong, but correct language of Scripture is, "Whosoever will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God." To be the enemy of a benevolent, omnipotent Being, is surely to stand in a position awfully alarming.

Some weeks in December, 1785, and the whole of the following January, Miss More spent at Hampton. In February she removed to London, where she appears to have met with Cowper's Poems, the perusal of which, in the state of her mind at the time, must have afforded her the greatest pleasure. Her views of them she thus communicates to her sister:—"The cold is so intense, that the best pleasure I have is to sit over a great fire and read Cowper's Poems. I am enchanted with this poet; his images are so natural, and so much his own! Such an original and philosophic thinker! Such genuine Christianity, and such a divine simplicity! but very rambling, and the order not very lucid. He seems to put down every thought as it arises, and never to retrench or alter any thing." The last remark we conceive to have been incorrect. Cowper scarcely ever composed hastily: the seeming negligence of style was elaborated with much care: his correct and natural taste led him to prefer this apparent carelessness to the measured stiffness of Pope.

During the spring of 1786, Miss More absented herself, while in London, from all those circles of gaiety, much as her presence might be desired, where

she had reason to think the time would be employed to no useful purpose. She was still, however, delighted to spend a few hours with a select company of literary friends, but the more virtuous they were the more were they approved. Religion had not impaired her literary taste, nor was it ever intended to have this effect. Because she was become a Christian she was not insensible to the muse's charms: she had rather a keener relish for them; but she sought them in a far different direction, where, if she met not with genius so dazzling, she was sure to find a sublime and dignified simplicity, far more ennobling than the evanescent corruscations of profane wit. "I spent quite a rational, sober, country day," she writes, "on Thursday, with the wise and virtuous Langton and Lady Rothes; so peaceful, that I could hardly persuade myself I was in London: dined at three; sat and worked while he read to us, or talked of books, till late at night. I really begin to hope we are reforming, for on Saturday we got such another sober day at Mrs. Montagu's, where we all agreed we had not been so comfortable for a long time: yet people have seldom the sense thus to meet, but must assemble in herds or flocks."

Averse as she was to great assemblies, she was, in some instances, during her stay in London on this occasion, drawn into them by the importunity of friends, whose kindness to her had been such, that she could not, without almost incurring the charge of ingratitude, give them a refusal. Once or twice she was ensnared, by an assurance that the meeting should be select. In our outset in the path of virtue, we meet often with the stangest besetments from the kindness of friends: their direct hostility, painful as it must ever be, is far less dangerous than their obliging solicitations. "I was asked, lately," she says, "to a great assembly,

where I should have met all the *corps diplomatique;* but it was not worth while to lose an evening, and get the head-ache, only to see a few ambassadors and envoys make low bows, drink orangeade, and play at whist. I have kept my resolution to avoid these great crowds, except when I have been snared into them by the alluring name of a private party, a trap into which I have sometimes fallen."

The truth is, that Miss More was never much captivated with earthly splendour, nor was she unduly elated by the attention paid her by distinguished individuals: she entertained a just sense of the honour done her by persons in exalted stations, but she suffered not this to betray her into a conformity to those practices which she thought not right. "I have," says she, "naturally, but a small appetite for grandeur, which is always satisfied even to indigestion, before I leave this town; and I require a long abstinence to get any relish for it again; yet the people with whom I am associated here, are very agreeable; but there is dress, there is restraint, there is want of leisure, to which I found it difficult to conform for any length of time;—and life is short."

The importance of this last consideration, she regarded, perhaps, more than all others: she felt the value of time, and was anxious to improve it to the best advantage: hence she permitted no opportunity of employing herself to any useful purpose to pass unimproved. "I sometimes," she writes, "get an interesting morning visitor: of two or three I have entertained a hope that they were beginning to think seriously. Lady B. and I had a long discourse, yesterday: she seems anxious for religious information. I told her much plain truth, and she bore it so well, that I ventured to give her Doddridge. Should she not stumble at the threshold, from the strong manner in which the book opens, I

trust she will read it with good effect. Miss M—— has been with me several times: she is beautiful and accomplished, and surrounded with flatterers, and sunk in dissipation. I asked her why she continued to live so much below not only her principles, but her understanding—what pleasure she derived from crowds of persons so inferior to her—did it make her happy? 'Happy!' she said; 'no;' she was miserable; she despised the society she lived in, and had no enjoyment of the pleasure in which her life was consumed. But what could she do? she could not be singular: she *must* do as her acquaintance did. I urged the evil of such conduct home upon her conscience, with such force, that she wept bitterly, and embraced me. I conjured her to read her Bible, with which she is utterly unacquainted. These fine creatures are, I hope, sincere, when they promise, but the very next temptation that comes across their path, puts all their good intentions to flight, and they go on as if they had never formed them, nay, all the worse for having formed, and not realized them: they shall have my prayers, which are the most effectual part of our endeavours."

Towards the close of spring Miss More received many pressing invitations from individuals of high respectability and eminent talent, to spend the summer with them. But except paying a short visit, in May, to Mrs. Bouverie, a lady who possessed a cultivated mind, with a warm, sympathetic heart, and spending a few days at Sandleford, with Mrs. Montagu, whose cultivated and pious discourse she found most beneficial, she could not be prevailed upon any longer to defer her visit to her delightful retreat at Cowslip Green. "Lady Spencer," she writes, "came herself to prevail on me to go with her for a little time to St. Alban's; but I could not resolve upon prolonging my stay from home. The truth is, I intend to get off all summer invitations, that I may

have the more time at Cowslip Green, which place I hope will gradually favour my escape from the world."

With these feelings she returned to Bristol in the middle of June. Her object now evidently was to escape entirely, in the best way she could, from worldly entanglements: she saw it to be important, and indeed essential to her happiness and future usefulness. She had long been taking steps to effect it, and had steadily pursued her aim, amidst strong opposing inducements. She had done much towards its accomplishment, but still there were ties which she had not broken, and which she found it most difficult to break; but this difficulty she hoped to surmount at Cowslip Green. To this secluded but pleasant spot she very shortly repaired, whence she thus writes playfully to Mrs. Boscawen: "You are so good to me, my dear Madam, that I know you will be glad to hear I am comfortably established in my little cottage. It is a pleasant, wild place, and I am growing a prodigious gardener, and make up by my industry for my want of science. I work in it two or three hours every day; and by the time the hour of visiting arrives, for I have my visitors in this little corner, I am vastly glad of a pretence for sitting down. As to books, *Je n'en sais rien;* I lead a kind of lawless life, and were it not, as Dogberry says, that reading and writing come by nature, I believe my present vagrant life would make me forego all the habits and customs of civilization."

But if she did not read much, she suffered not her pen to be unemployed. About this time she completed an interesting satirical poem, entitled 'Florio.' It depicts, in lively, glowing colours, the evils of foppery and dissipation, in the fictitious narrative of a young man, who, with good natural abilities, had been brought up in the highest style of fashion, but on whose education little care had been bestowed

The love of indolence thereby induced, and its pernicious results, are sketched with a master's hand.

"Though high renown the youth had gain'd,
No flagrant crimes his life had stain'd;
No tool of falsehood, slave of passion,
But spoilt by CUSTOM and the FASHION.
His mornings were not spent in vice,
'Twas lounging, sauntering, eating ice:
'Twas doing nothing was his curse—
Is there a vice can plague us worse?
The wretch who digs the mine for bread,
Or ploughs, that others may be fed,
Feels less fatigue than that decreed
To him who cannot think or read.
Not all the perils of temptations,
Not all the conflict of the passions,
Can quench the spark of glory's flame,
Or quite extinguish virtue's name,
Like the true taste for genuine saunter,
Like sloth, the soul's most dire enchanter.
The active fires that stir the breast,
Her poppies charm to fatal rest;
They rule in short and quick succession,
But sloth keeps one long, fast possession.
Ambition's reign is quickly closed,
Th' usurper's rage is soon depos'd.
Intemperance, where there's no temptation,
Makes voluntary abdication:
Of other tyrants short the strife;
But INDOLENCE is king for life;
The despot twists, with soft controul,
Eternal fetters round the soul."

In this interesting poem the sophistry and sly scepticism of Hume and Gibbon is justly, but severely satirized. The indolent, superficial Florio is naturally supposed to become the companion of a sceptic, among individuals of which class its disciples are invariably found.

"He knew the little sceptic prattle,
The sophist's paltry arts of battle;
Talk'd gravely of the atomic dance,
Of moral fitness, fate, and chance;
Swore priests' whole trade was to deceive,
And prey on bigots who believe:
With bitter ridicule could jeer,
And had the true free-thinking sneer.
He worship'd certain modern names,
Who history write in epigrams,
In pointed periods, stinging phrases,
And all the small poetic daisies
Which crowd the pert and florid style
Where fact is dropt to raise a smile;

Where notes indecent, or profane,
Serve to raise doubts, but not explain;
Where all is spangle, glitter, show,
And truth is overlaid below:
Arts scorn'd by history's sober muse,
Arts Clarendon disdain'd to use."

In the sequel, the contrast between a vain, shallow-minded fop, who is the mere sport of circumstances, and becomes the dupe of knaves, and that of a sober-minded, intelligent, virtuous country gentleman, is finely wrought. Florio, in compliance with his father's dying wish, is united to the daughter of this gentleman, a lady prudent, sensible, and pious, whose instructive conversation is made the means of his rescue from infidelity, and the change is thus happily described:—

"Abroad with joy and grateful pride
He walks with Celia by his side;
A thousand cheerful thoughts arise,
Each rural scene enchants his eyes.
With transport he begins to look
On nature's all-instructive book:
No object now seems mean or low,
Which point to Him from whom they flow.
A berry or a bud excites
A chain of reasoning which delights;
Which spite of sceptic ebullitions
Proves atheists not the best logicians;
A tree, a book, a blade of grass,
Suggests reflections as they pass;
Till Florio with a sigh confest
The simplest pleasures are the best.
As pious Celia raised the theme,
To holy faith and love supreme,
Enlighten'd Florio learn'd to trace
In nature's God, the God of grace.
Florio, escap'd from fashion's school,
His heart and conduct learns to rule;
Conscience his youthful life approves.
He serves his God, his country loves,
Reveres her laws, protects her rights,
And for her interest pleads or fights;
Reviews with scorn his former life,
And for his rescue thanks his wife."

Miss More continued at Cowslip Green, pursuing her rural occupations, and delighting herself with the retirement she enjoyed, till near the close of 1786,

when her affection for Mrs. Garrick again induced her to become that lady's companion through the winter. She staid a day or two in London, but called only on a few particular friends, when she proceeded to Hampton, where she could enjoy her beloved retirement, and pursue without interruption her studies.

She had recently received from Mrs. Boscawen, one of her most interesting correspondents, a letter full of complaints of the writer's insipidity and dullness. In reply she elegantly compliments her correspondent for her epistolary talents, and incidentally states her opinion of the style suited to this species of composition, in which she herself excelled. "I have been amusing myself, during a part of our solitude, with reading some of Madame de Sevigné's letters; and you cannot imagine, my dear madam, what a fund of entertainment I find as I go along, in drawing a parallel between them and those of a certain lady, whom it is one of my greatest honours to be permitted to call my friend. The same admirable turn of expression; the same ease which, when irritated, is so stiff, and when natural is so full of grace; the same philanthropy; the same warm feelings; and, above all, the same excess of natural tenderness; the same art of dignifying subjects in themselves of little moment, but which become amiable and interesting by some *true*, though seemingly *random* and *careless* stroke, that shows the hand of a master; but of a master sketching for his amusement, and not finishing for the public. This rage for finishing may produce good essays and fine orations, but it makes forged letters. For this reason I think Voltaire's letters are in bad taste: he always intends to be brilliant, and therefore is almost always affected: every passage seems written in his *very best* manner. Now, to me, the epistolary style is what it ought to be, when the writer, by a happy

and becoming negligence, has the art of making you believe that he could write a good deal better if he would, but that he has too much judgment to use great exertions on small occasions—he will not draw Ulysses's bow to shoot at a pigeon. It is not, however, that I think letter-writing trifling, because it is familiar, any more than I think an epigram easy because it is short.

Miss More had by this time composed her essay, entitled 'Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to general Society.' It was probably the product of her leisure hours, in her retirement at Cowslip Green, during the summer. She felt the importance of the subject, and hence, though she intended to publish it anonymously, she thought it needful, before sending it to the press, to subject it to the revision of her friend Dr. Horne; who, in reply to her request on the subject, thus writes. "My dear madam, you will make me extremely happy by a sight of any production of yours, calculated to benefit the great and the gay. Providence has led you to associate with them, as it raised Esther of old to the throne for this very purpose. We know how skilful an author you are. I shall rejoice to read what you promise to send me. The justness of your sentiments, and the correctness of your language, can leave little work for a critic, in the common acceptation of that word. Whatever may offer itself shall be put down on a separate sheet of paper, if you will honour me with the MSS. by the bearer."

At the commencement of 1787, Miss More and Mrs. Garrick spent a fortnight with the Hon. Mrs. Walsingham, at Thames Ditton. Both these ladies, and indeed all who had seen 'Bas Bleu' and 'Florio' in manuscript, were anxious to see them in print, being well assured they would meet with an extensive sale, and would be useful in reproving the vices of the age. Their repeated en-

treaties to have them published, overcame at length Miss More's scruples, and she was prevailed upon to send them to press. It was, however, her wish, that they should appear anonymously, a measure from which her friends strongly dissuaded her. Alluding to the circumstance, she thus playfully writes to Mrs. Boscawen: "I am delighted that 'Florio' has had the good fortune to amuse you. I am trying to get him upon his feet, but I do not expect him ever to *run*. Mr. Pepys will have told you what violent opposition the Thames Ditton party made to my bringing the said Monsieur Florio into the world clandestinely. Mrs. Walsingham joins Mrs. Garrick in insisting that he be brought into the world as the lawful issue of his mother. They also earnestly recommend my adding to this publication the 'Bas Bleu.' Now, my dear madam, be assured that I shall not stir a single step till I have your directions. I shall patiently wait for your opinion. You are my Court of Chancery, and your judgment will be decisive. If it agree with the wishes of my friends here, I shall send the poems to Cadell, with orders to print immediately, while the town is as idle as Florio."

The spring of 1787 Miss More spent chiefly in London. She was repeatedly urged again to mix with the gay world, but could not be prevailed upon to comply, except on a few extraordinary occasions, and even then with reluctance, less to please herself than to oblige others. No entreaties could induce her to enter the theatre, even to witness the performance of her own 'Percy' by that unrivalled actress, Mrs. Siddons. She knew well the evils often resulting from one false step, or one compliance with temptation, and hence, wisely resolved to be firm. That she met with no taunts from some of her worldly admirers, it would be false to assert. "Mr. Pepys," she writes on one occasion, "told me he had a great

struggle whether to come to us, or to go to 'Percy.' At last he concluded to give up the child for the sake of the mother. They were astonished at my not being there. I told them, as I had been able to resist Shakspeare for so many years, there was no great philosophy in withstanding the poet of that night. The next day I had another attack. I dined with Sir Joshua, Mr. Burke, and two or three others were present. He cried, all at once, 'Were you not delighted with Mrs. Siddons last night in Percy?' I replied, 'Sir, I was not there.' They would hardly believe me guilty of such insensibility."

The truth is, her mind was now fixed on the pursuit of objects far more important. The more she saw of the world, even of its gayest and most splendid scenes, the more was she convinced of its unsatisfying and delusive nature. She longed for her retirement at Cowslip Green, where, undisturbed, she could pursue studies pure and ennobling. Hence she firmly resisted all solicitations to spend the summer at places where the time would be chiefly unemployed. "I have had the fortitude," she writes, "to resist the most obliging invitations into Kent, from Mrs. Bouverie, the bishop of Chester, and Lady Amherst; but I could tell them that the attractions of my thatched cottage are more irresistible than all their splendour."

CHAPTER VI.

Correspondence with the Rev. John Newton—Composes her poem on 'Slavery'—Work on the 'Manners of the Great'—Effects of retirement—Again visits Mrs. Garrick—Publishes her poem on 'Slavery'——Returns to Cowslip Green—Moral effects of rural scenery—True notions of Christian piety—Again becomes Mrs. Garrick's companion—Increasing seriousness—Interest she took in public affairs—'Bonner's Ghost'—Its origin.

A SHORT time before Miss More quitted London for Cowslip Green, which she did early in June 1787, she went to hear the Rev. John Newton preach, in the city. She was so much pleased with the sermon, that she requested an interview with him after the service, in which she was equally pleased with his conversation. A friendship was thus formed which lasted through life. She could hardly have met with an individual better able, or more willing, to urge her forward in the course of virtue on which she had entered, and to give her the information she now needed. May we not suppose that the same Providence which directed Peter to Cornelius, directed her to this eminently useful and experienced minister? Of this we may be assured, that where there is an ardent thirst for religious knowledge, means will be provided for its supply, by that Being with whom alone it can originate.

Understanding that Miss More was about to leave London, Mr. and Mrs. Newton kindly urged her,

before she did so, to pay them one friendly visit. To this she readily consented, anticipating the pleasure she should derive from it; but, before the appointed time arrived, to her great regret she was prevented by an attack of illness. Mr. Newton wrote her a suitable letter on the occasion. Her reply is an interesting exhibition of the state of her mind at the time. "Many thanks for your kind letter, and the affectionate interest you are so good as to take in my welfare. It is worth while sometimes to be a little sick, were it only to try the kindness of one's friends. I am sometimes inwardly rejoiced when a slight indisposition furnishes me with a lawful pretence for not keeping a visiting engagement; but this was far from being the case on Friday last, when I had anticipated not only much pleasure, but profit. But you have said so many consolatory things upon the subject, and have put me in the way of drawing so much good out of these little incidental evils, that I hope I shall be better, not only for this disappointment, but also for many future ones. I am thoroughly persuaded of the necessity of seeing and acknowledging the hand of Providence in the smaller as well as in the greater events of life; but I want more of the *practical* persuasion of this great truth. Pray for me, my good sir, that I may be enabled to obtain more firmness of mind, a more submissive spirit, and more preparedness, not only for death itself, but for the common evils of life."

Shortly after her arrival at Cowslip Green, she was favoured with a visit from the late Mr. Wilberforce, who had then started on that noble career of benevolence, which he happily lived to see crowned with success. The object of his visit was to solicit the aid of her pen in the cause of abolition. He could not have applied to one more able or more willing to advocate the cause of the injured slave. To the claims of humanity she ever had a sacred regard;

hence she cheerfully complied with the request of Mr. Wilberforce, who furnished her with the necessary details; and she commenced her interesting poem on slavery.

During the summer, she published her 'Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to general Society.' This original and novel, but most important subject, she handled with consummate skill. It was published without her name; but its merits were soon appreciated, and the first edition was speedily sold off. The influence insensibly and unavoidably exerted by one portion of the community upon another, and especially of the higher upon the lower ranks, had never before been made the subject of free and popular remark; hence there was an originality about it, which added much to its interest. All acknowledged it to be the production of one well acquainted with the subject. It was clear that the accurate and minute delineations of the foibles of the higher ranks, could only have been given by one who had witnessed them.

In the opening remarks, she shows for whom the work was intended, and with what spirit it was written: "To a large and honourable class of the community, to persons considerable in reputation, important by their condition in life, and commendable for the decency of their general conduct, these slight hints are respectfully addressed. They are not intended to satirize vice nor to ridicule folly, being written neither for the foolish nor the vicious. The subject is too serious for ridicule; and those to whom it is addressed are too respectable for satire."

In every paragraph this design is kept in view. Severe as some of the remarks are, upon certain characters, yet the mild and Christian spirit in which they are made, evinces the tenderest solicitude for the reader, and excites respect rather than provokes resentment. Never were the evils of a mere life of

inactivity and frivolity more correctly depicted, or more faithfully reproved. The spirit of the world is shown to be, in every point, directly hostile to that of Christianity, and all efforts to make the love of the former, with the pursuit of its vanities, compatible with the love of the latter, are exposed as utterly delusive. The mask of piety is torn from the mere formalist, his inconsistencies are exposed, and he is exhibited in his native deformity. The work made a great impression at the time, and was very useful.

Its author did not long remain unknown. A report was speedily current that it was from the pen of Miss More: her friends soon acknowledged the pleasure they had derived from its perusal. Bishop Porteus, who had the highest regard for her talents, thus bore his testimony to its merits:—"I was charmed with your 'Thoughts on the Manners of the Great,' and am impatient to see it in the hands of every man and woman of condition in London and Westminster. It is a most delicious morsel, and I almost envy you the good it will do."

Mr. Newton, to whom a copy had been sent, in a letter he dispatched soon afterwards, took occasion to make the following interesting remarks:—"I congratulate you on the performance, and especially on the choice of a subject. You could easily write what would procure you more general applause; but it is a singular privilege to have a consecrated pen, and to be able and willing to devote our talents to the cause of piety. There are no persons whom I more compassionate, or of whom I am more afraid, than some of those whom you so well describe under the character of good sort of people. If I am lawfully called into the company of the profligate, I am too much shocked to be in great danger of being hurt by them. I feel myself in the situation of the traveller, when assaulted by the north wind. The

vehemence of the wind makes me wrap my cloak the faster about me. But when I am with your good sort of people, I resemble the same traveller when under the powerful beams of the sun: the insinuating warmth puts me insensibly off my guard, and I am in danger of voluntarily dropping my cloak, which could not be forced from me by downright violence. The circle of politeness, elegance, and taste, unless a higher spirit and principle predominates, is to me an enchanted spot, which I seldom enter without fear, and seldom retire from without loss."

It cannot be supposed that either Mr. Newton or Miss More were advocates for that stoicism which would prohibit all friendly intercourse with those whom we respect, though they may not be truly pious. Christianity nowhere enjoins a practice so anti-social. It tells us we are not to *love* the world; not to be conformed to it; not to imbibe its spirit; not to follow its example; and on all occasions, when duty does not require us to be present, or when we cannot hope to be useful, that we are to separate ourselves from it as far as is practicable. "But are we, then," asks a late excellent writer, "to forego our place and occupation in this mighty sphere; to cease to be men, that we may become Christians; and to pursue an ideal phantom of unattainable abstraction? Impossible! This would be to relinquish all hope of improving ourselves, and of being useful to others."

It is too often imagined, that retirement from the world will necessarily insure an uninterrupted flow of pious feeling; as if all the evils, against which we have to struggle, were external, and the heart were wholly free from impurity. This would be to fly from the duties of the station allotted us by Providence, instead of discharging them; a practice which would justify all the excesses of asceticism, and to

rend asunder all those delightful feelings of sociability and friendship which, especially when virtuously pursued, form the chief ingredients of our happiness through life. Yet into this error, in some slight degree, Miss More appears to have fallen. "I want to know, dear sir," she writes to Mr. Newton, "if it is peculiar to myself to form ideal plans of perfect virtue, and to dream of all manner of imaginary goodness in untried circumstances, while one neglects the immediate duties of one's actual situation? Do I make myself understood? I always fancied, that if I could secure to myself such a quiet retreat as I have now actually accomplished, that I should be wonderfully good; that I should have leisure to store my mind with such and such maxims; that I should be safe from such and such temptations; that, in short, my whole summers would be smooth periods of peace and goodness. Now, the misfortune is, I have actually found a great deal of the comfort I expected, but without any of the concomitant virtues. I am certainly happier here than in the agitation of the world, but I do not find that I am one whit better: with full leisure to rectify my heart and affections, the disposition unluckily does not come. I have the mortification to find, that pretty, and, as they are called, innocent employments, can detain my heart from heaven as much as tumultuous pleasures. If to the pure all things are pure, the reverse must be also true, when I can contrive to make so harmless an amusement as the cultivation of flowers stand in the room of a vice, by the great portion of time I give up to it, and by the entire dominion it has over my mind. I pass my life intending to get the better of this; but life is passing away, and the reform never begins."

There is a plaintiveness and an openness about these ingenuous self-accusations that reminds us of some of Cowper's letters. Mr. Newton's reply was

characteristic of his genuine piety, deep experience, and Christian affection. "What you are pleased to say, my dear madam, of the state of your mind, I understand perfectly well. I praise God on your behalf, and shall earnestly pray for you. I once stood upon this ground myself. I see what you want to set you at ease, and though I cannot give it you, yet He who has taught you to desire it will do every thing *for* you and *in* you, that is needful to make you as happy as is compatible with the present state of infirmity and warfare. But he must be waited *on*, and waited *for;* and for our encouragement it is written, as in letters of gold, over the gate of mercy, 'Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find.' We are apt to wonder, that when things we accounted hinderances are removed, and objects we have conceived to be advantages are bestowed, that still there is a secret something in the way, unaffected by any external changes. Our disorder is external. It is not any thing that surrounds us; it is not any thing in our outward situation, (provided it be not actually unlawful,) that can prevent or retard our advances in religion. We are defiled and impeded by what is within. So far as our hearts are right, all places and circumstances which his wise and good providence allots us, are nearly equal. Hinderances will prove helps, losses become gains, and crosses ripen into comforts. But till we are so far apprized of the nature of our disease as to apply to the great and only Physician, we still find that every other effort to relieve us will leave us as it found us. In such a world as this, and with such a nature as ours, there will be call for habitual self-denial. We must learn to cease from depending upon our own supposed wisdom, power, and goodness, that we may rely simply upon Him whose wisdom and power are infinite."

These excellent remarks could only have come

from the pen of a scribe well instructed in the essential leading points of the Christian system. Their importance and value will be admitted as an excuse for the interruption they may occasion to the narrative.

In December, 1787, Miss More paid her accustomed visit to Mrs. Garrick, and remained with her during the ensuing winter and spring, spending her time partly at Hampton, but chiefly in London. It is interesting to trace the gradual development of pious feeling on her mind, till at length it attained that fixedness of character which no outward circumstances, however unfavourable, could affect. Her obvious design now was, zealously, but not ostentatiously, to employ her talents in promoting the best interests of mankind, and more especially that important and most influential class, among which so large a portion of her life had been spent.

She had publicly, with Christian fidelity, borne her testimony in favour of piety, in her work on the 'Manners of the Great,' several editions of which had been rapidly sold off; and though she had not acknowledged herself as the author, yet it was generally known to be her production. In her private intercourse with the great, her conduct bore the same distinctive features. In a letter to her sister she thus writes: "For the last week I have been writing all the day and half the night, either in prose or in verse. My book is now before the public, with its sounding title. I really was fearful that many of those with whom I live might think my views and theirs too much alike. Occasions indeed certainly occur in which I speak honestly and pointedly; but all one can do in a promiscuous society is not so much to start religious topics, as to extract from common subjects some useful and awful truth, and to counteract the mischief of a popular sentiment, by one drawn from religion; and if I do any little good it is in this way, and this they will in a

degree endure. Fine people are ready enough to join you in reprobating vice, for they are not *all* vicious, but their standard of right is law, it is not the standard of the gospel."

Grateful that her first public efforts to rouse the dormant energies of the higher classes, to a consideration of the paramount importance of religion, had been so well received, and anxious to direct to a happy result that attention which she had awakened, she commenced a work more fully illustrative of Christian piety. In a letter to her sister, written in a strain of unaffected humility, and evidently while under the influence of deep concern for the individuals whose benefit she was seeking to promote, she hints what were her intentions. "In the 'Thoughts on the Manners of the Great,' I have not gone deep; it is but a superficial view of the subject, confined chiefly to the prevailing practical evils. Should this succeed, I hope, by the blessing of God, another time to attack the principle. I have not owned myself the author, not so much because of that fear of men which worketh a snare, as because, if anonymous, it may be ascribed to some better person; and because I fear I shall not be able to live as I write. I hope it may at least be useful to myself, as I give a sort of public pledge of my principles, up to which I earnestly hope I may be enabled to act. When the author is discovered, I shall expect to find almost every door shut against me; *mais n'importe*. I shall only be sent to my darling retirement. I spent Saturday evening at Lady Amherst's. The book lay on the table: several of the company took it up, talked it over, and Mr. Pepys looked me through, so that I never had such difficulty to keep my countenance. A day or two before this I dined at the Bishop of Salisbury's, and was obliged to sit and hear him, Mrs. Montagu, and the Bishop of Lincoln talk it over with the greatest warmth."

Another work, for the benefit of a far different class, now occupied all her time. Her Christian philanthropy prompted her cheerfully to exert her talents in any direction, and for any class, where they appeared likely to be useful. Her poem on slavery, which she had been compelled to lay aside to finish her prose work, she was now called upon to complete without delay. To her sister she writes, "I am now busily engaged in completing my poem on slavery. I grieve that I did not set about it sooner, as it must now be composed in such haste as no correct poem should ever be written in; but good or bad, if it comes not out at the particular moment when the discussion comes on in parliament it will not be worth a straw. This I shall bring out in an open, honourable manner, with my name staring in the front. It will be too short and too hurried, and of course will be very imperfect. I would on no account bring out so slight and hasty a production on any less pressing occasion, but here time is every thing."

The poem thus hastily composed, fully sustained its author's reputation, while it did honour to her heart, breathing throughout a tone of moral, pious, and most benevolent feeling, pure, elevated, and scriptural. Everywhere it was spoken of in terms of high admiration, as a work of unusual merit; as well for the truth of its sentiments as for the excellence of its composition. Though rapidly, it was not negligently written: it met with an extensive sale, and evidently aided the humane cause of abolition.

Miss More's most decided attachment to piety, which, though she did not ostentatiously or imprudently exhibit, she took as little pains to conceal, exposed her to the taunts and gibes of some who entertained the highest regard for her talents: but the opposition she thus met with, was confined to a

few harmless, though not unprovoking sarcasms. The openness of her character, the obvious sincerity of her piety, and the lively interest she took in the welfare of all with whom she was associated, if it did not convert her opponents into friends, disarmed them of their weapons. Happily, the persecuting spirit of former ages no longer existed, or, if it did, it had assumed a very different character, blushing, except in a few extraordinary occasions, to show itself in other forms than those of ridicule or slander, sufficiently irritating and vexatious, it is true, affording ample scope for much self-denial as well as self-controul, but of a character far more endurable, and less injurious, than actual opposition. How earnestly is it to be wished, that this demoniacal spirit may soon for ever cease to exist: but this can never be the case till the earth be filled with the knowledge of God. The Spirit of the world, and the Spirit of genuine piety, be they placed in whatever circumstances, or transformed into whatever shapes they may, must ever be diametrically opposite.

In a letter to her sister, she thus alludes to the species of annoyance she occasionally experienced; and the extract shows how far the love of an evil practice may blind the mind. "Yesterday I visited Mr. ——: he took me to task in general terms for having exhibited such monstrously absurd doctrines. I knew he alluded to the 'Manners of the Great,' but we pretended not to understand each other, and it was a most ridiculous conversation. He defended (and that was the joke) religion against me, and said he would do so against the whole bench of bishops, that the fourth commandment was the most amiable and merciful law ever promulgated, as it entirely considers the ease and comfort of the hard labouring poor, and beasts of burden; but that it was never intended for persons of fashion, who have no occasion to rest, as they never do any thing on other

days; and indeed, at the time the law was made, there were no people of fashion. He really pretended to be in earnest, and we parted, mutually unconvinced, he lamenting that I am fallen into the heresy of puritanical strictness; and I lamenting that he is a person of fashion, for whom the ten commandments were not made."

Previous to leaving London, Miss More made some very pleasant excursions in the vicinity. May the 22nd, she writes; "I have been pleasantly engaged for a week, during this fine weather, in going almost every day to some charming villa of different friends. Tuesday I dined at Strawberry Hill, with a good little party: the next day we went to a sweet place, which Mr. Montagu has bought, on Shooter's Hill. Another day, I went to Richmond with Mrs. Boscawen, and I must not omit to mention, among my country excursions, dining with Mrs. Trimmer and her twelve children, at Brentwood,—a scene of instruction and delight. Her appearance, behaviour, and conversation are full of good sense and propriety: she is the author whom I venture most to recommend. I presumed to give her some advice about booksellers, for, popular as she must be, she has got little or nothing by her writings, except reputation, and the consciousness of doing good; two things on which I set all due value, yet, where there is so large a family, money must be a very important consideration."

In June Miss More quitted London, but before repairing to Bristol, she spent a fortnight delightfully at Fulham, with the family of Bishop Porteus. She proceeded to Bristol early in July; and after staying a few days with her friends there, hastened to her beloved retirement at Cowslip Green. The contrast between this quiet, retired spot, and that in which she had spent much of her time, in winter and spring, none knew better than herself how to

improve; nor could any have been more anxious to derive benefit from. To minds charmed only with worldly gaiety, the change would have been insufferably tedious; but it was far from being so with her: she was delighted with the solitude, though she regretted that it was not to her a source of more spiritual improvement. In an interesting letter to Mr. Newton, illustrative of the ever-wakeful and minute attention she paid to the state of her mind, she thus candidly contrasts the different effects produced upon it, by her intercourse with the world, and when retired from it. "I have been now, some weeks, in the quiet enjoyment of my beloved solitude, and the world is wiped out of my memory, as with the sponge of oblivion: but so much do my gardening cares and pleasures occupy me, that the world is not half so formidable a rival to heaven, in my heart, as my garden. I trifle away much time, under a pretence (for I must have a creditable motive to impose even upon myself) that it is good for my health; but, in reality, because it promises a sort of indolent pleasure, and keeps me from thinking and finding out what is amiss in myself. Fears and snares seem necessary to excite my circumspection, for it is certain, that my mind has more languor, and my faith less energy, here, where I have no temptations from without, and where I live in the full enjoyment and constant perusal of the most beautiful objects of inanimate nature, the lovely wonders of the munificence and bounty of God: yet, in the midst of his blessings, I should be still more tempted to forget Him, were it not for the frequent nervous headaches, and low fevers, which I find to be wonderfully for my moral health."

In this respect Miss More's feelings were not peculiar. Others, who have passed from the active, exciting scenes of life, to that solitude which they had ideally invested only with charms of innocence

and loveliness, have found, when they have realized it, that retirement and active life has each its attendant evils: but it must not be inferred, that because Miss More found them so nearly counter-balanced, they are so in all cases. The natural aversion of men to things spiritual, will be felt in both; but the individual who is constantly mixing with the world, will be exposed to a thousand risks, which in retirement are unknown. Mr. Newton was aware of this: none knew better than himself the withering effect of worldly contacts: hence he had kindly expressed his apprehensions for Miss More's safety. In reply, she says: "My situation is, as you remark, full of danger, yet, less from the pleasures, than from the deceitful favour and the insinuating applause of the world. The goodness of God will, I humbly trust, preserve me from taking up with so poor a portion; nay, I hope what he has given me, is to show that all is nothing short of himself: yet there are times when I am apt to think it a great deal, and to forget Him who has promised to be my portion for ever. I am delighted, as you rightly conjectured, with the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' I forget my dislike to allegory, while I read the spiritual vagaries of his fruitful imagination."

Mr. Newton's anxiety for his correspondent's spiritual welfare, prompted him to make his letters bear decidedly on the essential points of the Christian system, in which, perhaps, he imagined she needed some further instruction. In a letter he sent her about this time, he makes the following remarks on the change which Christian piety never fails to produce on the heart:—"Till the happy moment of our renewal by Divine grace arrives, our noblest powers are all cramped and confined, and are incapable of discerning their proper objects. God is everywhere, but we have no such perception of his presence and perfections as can engage us to love, fear, serve, or

trust him. Eternity is near, and the next hour may remove us into it, yet our thoughts and pursuits are confined to the things of time, and we have no fixed, enlightened apprehensions of the things beyond them. A new, unbounded prospect breaks in upon the mind, that is touched by the power of God's Spirit, productive of so universal a change in our desires, hopes, and aims, that it may justly be compared to a new birth. The rational life is not more superior to the animal, nor more distinct from it, than this spiritual life is superior to them both. This qualifies us for the higher enjoyment of the unseen state, which alone can fully satisfy the original thirst and capacities of our souls, and make us truly and finally happy."

In the autumn, Miss More made an excursion of some weeks to visit some friends in the neighbouring counties. With Mrs. Montagu she spent some days most pleasantly in Berkshire. In one of her letters she gives the following playful sketch of the manner in which she spent her time, and takes occasion to animadvert upon the last volumes of Gibbon's 'Roman History,' then recently published. "I have, during the whole summer kept the even tenor of my way with such sober and quiet uniformity, that the history of my adventures would make as dull a novel as could be had at any circulating library, and that is saying a great deal. I do not, however, *complain;* I have lived much to my own taste, and have enjoyed some of the best blessings of human life—tolerable health, retired leisure, beautiful rural scenery, a garden full of roses, and books, if I had industry to read them. Apropos of the latter, I was in imminent danger of waiting till winter for Gibbon's last volumes, as I never think of buying a book till it is shrunk to much smaller dimensions than the corpulent quarto; but by the greatest good luck in the world I have a neighbour who reads, so that

I have almost waded through that mass of impiety and bad taste. I protest I think that if this work were to become a standard of style and religion, Christianity and the English language would expire together; and the same period would witness the downfall of sound principles and true taste. I have seldom met with more affectation or less perspicuity."

Miss More remained at Cowslip Green till Christmas, when she again visited London, to become Mrs. Garrick's companion for the winter. She was now generally known to be the author of the 'Tract on the Manners of the Great;' the seventh edition of which was then in the press. On examining its arguments, which she did carefully in correcting the proofs, she felt more than ever convinced of their importance, and was thus encouraged to persevere in publishing her sentiments on the points even more openly than she had yet made them known. Her disinclination to be present at parties where no instruction was likely to be gained, nor any good likely to be done, was greater than ever. Hence her visits, when in London, were much less frequent this winter, than on any former occasion. She had not, however, even up to this time, acquired sufficient firmness and resolution to disentangle herself from connexions merely worldly, but she was seriously meditating it, and contemplating what steps she should take to effect it entirely.

The decease, about this time, or at a period shortly previous, of several friends to whom she had been strongly attached, renewed her convictions of the vanity of earthly dependencies, and excited her to increased activity in the cause of piety. To her sister she thus writes :—" Poor Dr. Adams is gone to his last home! How short is the time since I was at Pembroke College with him, Dr. Edwards, Johnson, and Henderson, not one of whom are now alive! I have been spared, they have been taken;

let me adore the long-suffering goodness of God, who has given me so prolonged a sphere for repentance. Poor Mrs. Handcock, too, Mrs. Vesey's dear friend and companion, is dead. It is now melancholy to look at the house where I have seen so many individuals of real ingenuity and talent, heard so much pleasant conversation, and made so many friendships, and to think that two of its mistresses, whose faces were never turned towards me but with kindness, who never received me without affection, or parted from me without regret—one is no more, and the other is bereft of her faculties! What a call for serious reflection! I want to find my heart more affected with feeling for the sorrows of others, and with gratitude for my own mercies."

Although Miss More took but little interest generally in political affairs, yet she participated sincerely in the natural regret then universally experienced on account of the melancholy indisposition of his late excellent majesty George the Third. None were more sincerely sorry for his affliction, and nonrejoiced more at his recovery. In her correspondence she mentions many interesting anecdotes of the piety, submission, and Christian magnanimity of that virtuous monarch. "Dr. Willis," she says, "assured me that he never saw so much natural sweetness and goodness of mind united to so much piety, as in the king. During his illness, he many times shed tears for Lord North's blindness. The Bishop of London had been to the king that morning; he found him in a very devout frame of mind, which his enemies will say is the surest sign he is deranged. His majesty told the bishop that, at the worst, his trust in God had never forsaken him; adding, that he wished to return thanks to Almighty God, in the most public manner, and hoped the bishop would not refuse him a sermon. He proposed going to St. Paul's, to make this solemn, grateful

acknowledgment. It was a grand idea, and the scene will be one most deeply interesting."

At this solemn procession Miss More was present, and the following remarks she made upon it, prove, incidentally, the workings of her benevolent mind. "I was much affected," she says, "at the sight of the king. The mob were joyful, but rather too temperate in their acclamations, which is said to have proceeded from a fear of overpowering the king's feelings. The poor soldiers were on guard from three in the morning. I would willingly relinquish all the sights I may see this twelvemonth, to know they had each been supplied with some cold meat and a pot of porter. I was troubled, too, about the six thousand charity-children that were present on the occasion, but the bishop assures me they had each of them a roll and two apples."

The other public measure in which she felt deeply interested, was the bill for the abolition of West Indian slavery. She had nobly supported the cause by her pen, and she now watched with intense anxiety every step of its progress through the legislature. Writing to her sister, she says, "I meant to have informed you, on Wednesday, of the glorious and most promising opening for the great cause of abolition, in the House of Commons, in its having had the united support of Pitt and Fox; but I had so much meeting, writing, and congratulation, that I could not find one moment's leisure. The Bishop of London fully intended to have been the first to apprize me of this most interesting intelligence, and accordingly rose early to write me a note; but Lady Middleton forestalled him by writing me word on Monday, at midnight. I fear there will be great opposition to it in the Lords. I dined with a party of peers at Lord Ossory's, a short time since, and there was not one friend to that humane bill. Mr. Wilberforce and his coadjutors are still shut up at Mrs. Bouverie's, at Teston, writing in its defence. I tell

them that I hope Teston will be the Runnemede of the negroes, and that the great charter of African liberty will be there completed."

Miss More spent a fortnight in May with her esteemed friend, Mr. Walpole. The first week in June she passed very delightfully with the Bishop of London, at Fulham, and the next with no less pleasure at Mrs. Bouverie's, in Kent, whence she returned to Cowslip Green. While at Fulham, she composed her interesting *jeu d'esprit*, entitled, 'Bonner's Ghost,' which Mr. Walpole subsequently printed at his own elegant press, at Strawberry Hill.

The circumstance which led to it she thus relates:—"In the gardens of the palace at Fulham, is a dark recess; at the end of this stands a choir, which once belonged to Bishop Bonner. Bishop Porteus one morning, more than two centuries afterwards, just as the clock of the Gothic chapel had struck six, undertook to cut with his own hand a narrow walk through this thicket, since called the *Monk's Walk*. He had no sooner commenced his work, than up started from the choir, suddenly, the ghost of Bishop Bonner, who, in a tone of just and bitter indignation, uttered the following verses."

In these spirited lines, the superstitious mummeries of the Romish church are happily, with just and merited severity, satirized; and the poem closes with the following elegant compliment to Bishop Porteus:—

"Oh, born in every thing to shake
The systems plann'd by me!
So heterodox, that he would make
Both soul and body free.

Nor clime nor colour stays his hand;
With charity deprav'd,
He would, from Thames' to Gambia's strand,
Have all be free and sav'd.

And who shall change his wayward heart,
His wilful spirit turn?
For those his labours can't convert,
His weakness will not burn."

CHAPTER VII.

Excursion through some northern counties—Commences her village labours—Christian liberality of sentiment—Endeavours to instruct the poor—Opposition she met with—Success of her exertions—Again visits London—Publishes her 'Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World'—Its design and merits—Return to Cowslip Green—Continued attention to her schools—Again becomes Mrs. Garrick's companion.

Miss More was again comfortably settled at her hermitage, (as she called it,) at Cowslip Green, in June 1789. "I am now," she writes, "a perfect hermit, enjoying complete solitude, with such casual interruptions as make a grateful vicissitude. The world is wiped out of my memory as totally as if it had never occupied a place in it; but the remembrance of a few wise, and good, and pleasant friends lives in my heart, accompanies me in my walks, and embellishes my solitude."

The casual interruptions here alluded to, were the occasional visits of her friends, all of whom were most anxious to spend a short time with her in her retreat. Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Garrick, Mrs. Kennicott, and Mr. Wilberforce, each passed some days with her most delightfully. The latter persuaded her—probably because he thought it would remove those nervous head-aches of which she now frequently complained—to accompany him on a tour through some of the northern counties. In a letter

to Mrs. Carter she thus alludes to this excursion. "I have led a sad vagrant sort of life lately, which is not very compatible with regularity of any sort. I took a ramble with my excellent and pleasant friends Mr. and Miss Wilberforce, (after they had bestowed some time on me at my cottage,) through Monmouthshire, and we sailed down the pleasant picturesque river Wye, enjoying at once the benefits of improving conversation, and the charms of the most beautiful and interesting scenery. We deplored the ruthless hand of war, which had dismantled castles; and we contemplated abbeys which the mouldering hand of time would have mellowed into more affecting beauty, had the zeal of the reformation confined itself to opinions and principles, and not visited its undistinguishing fury on stone walls, pillars, and windows."

On her return from this excursion she spent a few days very pleasantly at Stoke, with the Plantaganet's Dowager Duchess. In the autumn she complied with a pressing invitation from Mrs. Montagu to pay her a visit at Sandleford, in Berkshire, where, she says, "I staid ten days, in five of which I had the most unrelenting head-aches, and the intervening five, instead of being employed to redeem the inaction of the others, were past in pleasant airings on this fine estate." A short time only intervened before she quitted her retirement, on a visit for a few days to the Bishop of Salisbury, where she met a very select and agreeable party. Such was now her dislike to public meetings of any kind, except those which were expressly for religious worship, that she even refused to attend an oratorio held during her stay there, though all the party besides herself went; alleging as a reason, that going to public places neither suited her taste nor her health.

Alluding to her frequent rambles and visits, she playfully remarks, "With all my fantastic dreams

of hermitage and retreat, and a place to retire to be melancholy in, any thing less like a hermit, or more like a dissipated fine lady cannot be easily conceived." But the fact was, as she elsewhere states, that her whole time was not devoted to travelling and visiting; on the contrary, it was now her sincere desire to employ herself for the benefit of mankind, in any way that might offer. She seems to have been looking round for some work on which to fix her attention, in the hope of employing herself beneficially. About this time a circumstance came to her knowledge which called into exercise her benevolent exertions, in a way perfectly disinterested, and most honourable to herself. "I am," she writes to Mrs. Carter, "engaged in a work in which I am sure I shall have your hearty prayers and good wishes. You will, I dare say, mistake the word *work*, and think it some literary vanity; but no, *le voici*. A friend of mine, and myself, having with great concern discovered a very large village at some miles distance from me, containing incredible multitudes of poor, plunged in an excess of vice, poverty, and ignorance, beyond what one would suppose possible in a civilized and Christian country, have undertaken the task of seeing if we cannot become humble instruments of usefulness to these poor creatures, in the way of schools and a little sort of manufactory; the difficulties are great, and my hopes not sanguine; but He who does not despise the day of small things will, I trust, bless this project. I am going directly down to my little colony, to see what can be done before winter sets in. My long absence at that period will be a grievous circumstance."

It was about this time reported, in some of the newspapers, that Miss More was married to Dr. Priestly; in allusion to which she amusingly writes, "The newspapers, the other day, were pleased to

marry me to Dr. Priestly. I am surprised they did not rather choose to bestow me on Mr. M——, as his wife is probably better broken to these eastern usages than Mrs. Priestly can be. I can account for this absurd report, I think. Being one day in a large company, who all inveighed bitterly against Lindsey, and some other Socinians, who had deserted the church, because they could not subscribe to the articles, I happened to say that I thought sincerity such a golden virtue, that I had a feeling bordering on respect for such as had seceded from principle; for when a man gives such an unequivocal proof of his being in earnest as to renounce a lucrative profession, rather than violate his conscience, I must think him sincere, and of course respectable. I have ever since been accused of rank Socinianism, and the papers soon after married me to Priestly, though I reprobate his opinions. I never saw him but once in my life, and he had then been married twenty years."

The charge of Socinianism is unhappily too often most illiberally preferred by many excellent well-meaning individuals, against all who even allow the *possibility* of their being sincere. Some of our brightest characters and profoundest theologians have suffered much from this foul detraction. Difficult, however, as it may be to imagine how persons professing to derive their sentiments only from the Scriptures, can deny the divinity of the Redeemer, that great truth, which while it cements and gives symmetry and solidity to the Christian system, imparts to it life, spirit, and beauty; and dangerous as the denial of a truth so essential and important must ever appear to the mind that views the subject aright, yet are we bound, on the common broad ground of Christian liberality, where the moral conduct is consistent, to give them credit for sincerity, with or without the voucher of a pecuniary sacrifice, how-

ever much we may deplore their delusion. To God only are we accountable for our faith. He has given us a revelation of his will, and endowed us with faculties capable of understanding it. But in our fallen state, the danger is of this faculty becoming warped by the predominance of pride. Can we be innocent if we become thus bewildered, and lose our way in the regions of error?

It is not improbable that Mr. Newton, knowing that Miss More had correspondence, and was occasionally associated with individuals of talent, whose views of Christianity were superficial, if not essentially erroneous, might be apprehensive lest, before her principles had become fixed on points of the utmost importance, she should swerve from the truth. Hence, in one of his letters to her at this time, he incidentally touches on the point in a way that was likely to have a salutary effect. "The truth that individuals, and families, and nations, and events are under the administration of Him who his ownself bore our sins in his own body on the tree, is the very life of my soul, the foundation of my hopes, and of all that deserves the name of religion: without it all appears to me dead, uncomfortable, and unfruitful. No scheme of religion can afford me relief but that which is accommodated to the state of the unworthy, helpless sinner, who needs multiplied forgiveness and continual supplies. Had it been left to me, when I first perceived my wretchedness, to devise a way of escape, I must have been utterly and for ever at a loss. But, blessed be God, I found this great desideratum revealed in the gospel: Jesus, as there exhibited, is exactly the Saviour I should have wished for, had I known him. My case required a compassion that could pity the most obstinate and rebellious; a power that could subdue the most inveterate habits of wickedness, while it protected me from dangers which I could neither foresee nor

prevent, and from legions of enemies with whom I was quite unable to cope. It required, too, some very valuable and important considerations to satisfy me how it could be consistent with the justice and holiness of God to afford mercy to one so guilty as myself. But in what the Scripture teaches of the person, the offices, the love, the sufferings of the Son of God, I have found enough to silence every doubt, to obviate every difficulty, to banish every fear: so that if my faith and actual experience were but equal to the views my judgment has formed upon these points, I should be the happiest creature alive, and should go on singing with the apostle, to the end of my days, even in the midst of tribulation, "If God be for us who can be against us? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen, and is now making intercession for us. Who shall separate us from his love?"

Miss More, however, needed not the cautions given her on this point. She had carefully examined the grounds of this great leading fact of Christianity, and had cordially embraced it as a doctrine of revelation, as important as it was scriptural. Mr. Newton, if he actually felt any misgivings on the point, could only have grounded them on the false report above alluded to; hence some will be ready to suppose that his remarks were uncalled for. But as he well knew the deadly influence of the error, and its extremely pernicious results, both on the devout feelings of the heart, and on the outward general conduct—its tendency to foster ambition and pride, rather than to produce humility and meekness—he was so far from deserving censure, that he merited commendation, for incidentally expressing his views on the point, which, though they might not be called for, might do some good, and could do no injury. From the diverse and almost opposite character of Miss More's correspondents, it is not surprising that

she should sometimes have received cautions contradictory in their nature and tendency. While many were delighted that her attachment to piety not only became daily more decided, but continued steadily to increase, there were not a few among those whom she highly esteemed who viewed it, if not with open disapprobation, yet with great suspicion. In reply to some cautions which an individual of this class had given her, she remarks, "I heartily thank you, dear sir, for your friendly cautions about what you call the Constantinopoliton jargons," (the epithet applied by her correspondent to different religious systems,) "but believe me, I am in no danger: you yourself have hardly a higher disdain of the narrow spirit, the contracting influence of party in religion. I deplore the separating system, and the sad bigotry which has split the Christian world, and made the different sects like the teeth of Cadmus, destroy one another as fast as they spring up. But, indeed, this is not the spirit of Christianity, which is all love and peace."

The correct views Miss More now entertained of the Christian system, in contradistinction to a mere system of ethics, will be seen by the following remarks on a volume of Dr. Blair's Sermons, then published—remarks illustrative of the independence of her mind and the accuracy of her judgment:—"I cannot say that I am at all delighted with the new volume of Dr. B——. Indeed, after having read four or five of the sermons, I desisted, and left this showy desert for nourishment afforded by more solid divines. I know I am broaching a very unpopular opinion, but I judge as I feel, and not as I hear. The second discourse, for instance, on sensibility, will, I think, be likely to be better relished by young ladies from the boarding-school, than by serious persons. To me, it appears to contain principles not so evangelical as one should expect from so expe-

rienced a divine. He very injudiciously prefers complexional feeling, to those right actions which are performed by people of a sober character, purely from a sense of duty. Is not this setting the virtues of the constitution above the Christian graces, and preferring that goodness which proceeds from a kindly combination of the elements, to the difficult exertion of religious principle? I do not scruple to say, that such divinity revolts me, but it will make the book acceptable to many. Sensibility appears to me to be neither good nor evil in itself, but in its application. Under the influence of Christian principle, it makes saints and martyrs; ill-directed or uncontrolled, it is a snare, and the source of much temptation. Besides, as people cannot get it unless it be given them, to descant on it seems to me as idle as to recommend people to have black eyes or fair complexions."

It was during this summer that Miss More's sisters, having by their persevering diligence and economy, realized a sufficient income to secure them a comfortable competence for life, determined to dispose of their establishment at Bristol, and to repair to Bath, where they built for themselves a house, which they furnished and entered upon a few weeks before Christmas, 1789. Here they principally resided, but occasionally spent a few months in the summer at Cowslip Green. They had been most actively and beneficially employed up to this period. The numerous and highly respectable pupils with whom they had been entrusted, had been carefully instructed, not only in all the essentials of a good polite education, but in the principles of Christian piety. Hence they might retire from the active scenes of life, with a delightful consciousness of having exerted their energies usefully, to the utmost of their ability, without which, retirement can afford us

no solace or comfort. But in their retirement they wished not to become inactive, still less was self-indulgence their object. They now cheerfully and vigorously exerted themselves in aid of the benevolent object which their sister had so auspiciously commenced—the gratuitous religious instruction and improvement of the poor children in the surrounding neighbourhood. These labours she commenced at Chedder, a large, populous village, then almost entirely neglected. The opposition she met with, and her persevering, successful efforts to remove it, she thus amusingly relates, in a letter to Mr. Wilberforce:—"I was told we should meet with great opposition, if I did not try to propitiate the chief despot of the village, who is very rich; so I ventured to pay him a visit at his house, near Bridgewater. He begged I would not think of bringing any religion into the country, for it was the worst thing in the world for the poor. In vain did I represent to him that they would be more industrious as they became better principled; in vain did I assure him that, for my own part, I had no selfish views in what I was doing. He gave me to understand that he knew the world too well to believe either the one or the other. Somewhat dismayed to find that my success bore no proportion to my submission, I was almost discouraged from more visits; but I found that friends must be secured at all events, for if the rich set their faces against us, and influenced the poor people, I saw that nothing but hostilities would ensue; so I made eleven more of these agreeable visits, and as I improved in the art of canvassing, had better success. I inquired of each if he could recommend to me a house; and said that I had a little plan which I hoped would secure their orchards from being robbed, their rabbits from being shot, their game from being stolen, and which might lower the poor-rates. If effect be the best proof

of eloquence, then mine was a good speech, for I gained at length the hearty concurrence of the whole people, and their promise to discourage or favour the poor, in proportion as they were attentive or negligent in sending their children. By their assistance, I procured immediately a good house, with an excellent garden, of almost an acre of ground, which I have taken at once, for six guineas and a half per year. I have ventured to take it for *seven years*—there's courage for you! It is to be put in order *immediately*, for the night cometh; and it is a comfort to think, that though I may be dust and ashes in a few weeks, yet by that time this business will be in actual motion."

Her exertions in this village were followed by the happiest results. The poor were benefited, and the rich were pleased to find that the fears they had entertained were groundless. Encouraged by her success, and aided by her sisters, she sought to widen the sphere of her operations. "I have been ferreting about these two months, among the neglected villages of this hardly Christian country, to find out those places which are particularly destitute of religious advantages, and have fixed on the central parish of six large ones, for the scene of my operations. I have hired an old vicarage, which has had no inhabitant for these hundred years, and here I purpose placing some intelligent and pious individuals, to instruct the poor, who are more vicious and ignorant than I could have conceived it possible for any to be in a country called Christian. As all these villages are from six to ten miles distance from me, you will believe that I am not a little engaged. I am not apt to be sanguine in my expectations, but I comfort myself by remembering, that we have nothing to do with events; and, indeed, the uncommon prosperity we have at Chedder ought to encourage us. There we have a great number who could

only tell their letters when we began, who can already read the Testament, and not only say the Catechism, but give pertinent answers to any questions which involve the first principles of Christianity. We often agreed that "To mend the world's a vast design;" and I am now convinced of the truth of this by the difficulties attending the half-dozen parishes we have undertaken. It is grievous to reflect that while we are sending missionaries to our distant colonies, our own villages are perishing for lack of instruction. We have, in this neighbourhood, thirteen adjoining parishes without so much as even a single resident curate. I am deeply convinced how very poor and inadequate any miserable attempts of mine can be to rectify so wide-spread an evil, yet I could not be comfortable till something was attempted. But how we shall be able to keep up these things amidst so much opposition, vice, poverty, and ignorance, as we have to deal with, I cannot guess."

The pleasure she experienced in these exertions, though attended with considerable labour, increased greatly the dislike she already felt for pursuits merely worldly, and she regretted much having engaged again to spend the winter in London, with Mrs. Garrick, whose companion she became early in January 1790.

She remained with her till the following June, but spent much of her time at Hampton, and mixed less frequently with the circles of gaiety than on any former occasion. "As to London," she writes to her sister, "I shall be glad to get out of it. The old little parties are not to be had in the usual style of comfort—every thing is great, and vast, and late, and magnificent, and dull. I very seldom go to them, and always repent when I do. The old are all growing young, and seventy dresses like seventeen."

Respected and honoured as she was for her talents, it is not improbable, from the decided tone of her piety at this period, that her company was as little desired by the vain and the gay, as theirs was wished for by her. She would probably be regarded, except by a few choice friends, as an unwelcome intruder, whose object it was to spy out their imperfections rather than to join in their diversions. The world will always love its own, and only its own. The vain and trifling will never regard with a friendly eye the truly pious, however much they may applaud their genius and talents, even though their conduct may be most amiable, and their piety in the highest degree unobtrusive.

During her stay in London she published, but without her name, the interesting essay she had long been composing, entitled, ' An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World.' No sooner did it appear than it was bought up with the greatest eagerness. The attempt to conceal its author was vain. All pronounced it to be her production. "Indeed my good friend," writes Mrs. Boscawen, in an interesting letter, "your plan of secrecy would have succeeded perfectly, and you would have been completely concealed if giants could be concealed ; but if, like Saul, you are higher than any of the people from the shoulders and upwards, you must be conspicuous ; if your energy, your style, your piety, is so superior, you must be discovered through all the veils that are so carefully thrown over you. *Vous percez tout.*"

Cadell had received directions from Miss More to send a copy to several of her friends, but not to name the author. One was forwarded to Mrs. Chapone, who thus quaintly, in a note to Miss More, acknowledged its receipt. "The same good gentleman, who some time ago, gave his excellent thoughts to the great, has again made a powerful effort for their re-

formation, which they receive with as much avidity as if they meant to be amended by it; indeed he has wisely recommended it to their taste by every charm and ornament of eloquence. He has been so obliging as to send me a copy of his admirable book; and as I do not know his name or address, I take the liberty of applying to you, who are, I believe, pretty well acquainted with him, though probably not aware of half his merits. I beg you will convey to him my grateful acknowledgements for his favour, and assure him that he continually rises in my esteem, and (gentleman though he be) I sincerely love and honour him, and wish the most perfect success to all his undertakings."

From Bishop Portius, to whom Cadell had forwarded a copy, Miss More received an interesting letter, in which he remarks, "Indeed, my dear friend, it is in vain to think of concealing yourself. Your style and manner are so marked, and so confessedly superior to those of any other moral writer of the present age, that you will be immediately detected by any one that pretends to any taste or skill in discriminating the characteristic excellencies of one author from another. You have certainly taken that wise bird the ostrich for your model on this occasion, who to conceal himself from his pursuers, runs his head into the sands, and though his whole body stands out behind, yet is perfectly convinced that nobody can see him. Few persons, I will venture to say, could write a book that could convey so much sound, evangelical morality, and so much genuine Christianity, in such neat and elegant language."

With this opinion of the work, the following, from the pen of Dr. Barington, the Bishop of Salisbury coincided: "Neither your wishes for concealment, nor my silence, will avail: the internal evidence is too powerful; and no doubt can remain on the mind of the reader of the 'Thoughts on the Manners of

the Great,' whether 'The Religion of the Fashionable World' proceeds from the same excellent heart and elegant pen. The work is admirably calculated, from its topics, the mode of pressing them, and the happy interweaving of Scripture language, to produce reformation in those for whose benefit it is professedly written. Whether extensive good will result from the publication, time alone will evince: but you will not have written in vain, if even a few parents, a few masters of families, and a few young persons, shall feel themselves so impressed with the truths you hold up to their view, as may induce them to regulate their conduct accordingly. Be the event, however, what it may, you will enjoy the first of all human blessings—the consciousness of having exerted the talents God has given you, in endeavouring to serve the great interests of religion and virtue."

"The general design of this work," its author informs us, "was to offer some cursory remarks on the state of religion in the higher classes: not only among that description of persons, who, whether from disbelief, or whatever other cause, avowedly neglect the duties of Christianity; but also among that more decent class, who, while they publicly acknowledge their belief of its truths, and are not inattentive to any of its forms, yet exhibit little of its spirit in their general temper and conduct." This design was most ably executed. Never were the evils of such grossly inconsistent conduct more clearly depicted, or more feelingly and faithfully reproved. All pretensions to Christian piety, not practically followed out in the general conduct, are shown to be utterly vain. It is made apparent, that Christianity, like its divine Author, is not only *denied* by those who openly disown its authority, but is *betrayed* still more, by the pretended, but treacherous disciple.

Unhappily, there has ever been in the Christian church, a numerous class of individuals, who, while they professed a high regard for Christianity, have in their general conduct utterly disobeyed all its precepts: and as the character of a religion is invariably taken, chiefly, if not entirely, from the conduct of its professors, publications to expose the shallow pretensions of such individuals, and to show the extremely pernicious results of such inconsistency, are always serviceable. Perhaps less attention was never paid to religion among the influential class of society, than at the period when this work appeared: the form existed, but it was without life: even its authorized teachers advocated it more as if it had been a fiction, than a solemn reality. The state of public affairs, too, was sufficiently alarming: details of the anarchy then existing in France, and of the disgraceful proceedings of the French revloutionists, were daily received: infidelity scowled fearfully upon the nations, threatening to sweep away by one mighty effort, the entire system of morals, or to burst asunder the barriers of all civil society, producing a universal scene of disorder, confusion, and misery.

Hence the importance of a publication, to call off men's minds from the form to the power of religion: to advocate, in language eloquent and energetic, the cause of true piety; and at the same time to point out the evils which had shorn it of its grandeur and beauty, presenting it to the gaze of the profane as a system, spiritless, withered, and almost worthless. After showing that Christianity as it then existed, was altogether a different thing from what it was in reality, and proving irresistibly, that a visible decay of true piety then existed, Miss More traces the evil to its source, clearly showing that the chief causes were the neglect of early religious education; the want of proper moral restraints upon

the young; the omission of family devotion; inattention to the cultivation of religion in the minds of servants; levity and inconsistency of religious professors. But all these evils, though deeply to be deplored, and most mischievous in their effects, it is most forcibly shown, do not affect, in the slightest degree, the truth or excellence of Christianity. "All the heavy charges," she writes, "which have been brought against religion, have been taken from its abuse. In every other instance, the injustice of this proceeding is allowed to be notorious: but there is a far greater want of candour in the judgment of men on this subject than on any other. If a man lose his estate by the chicanery of an attorney, or his health, by the blunder of a physician, it is commonly said, that the one was a disgrace to his profession, and the other ignorant of it; but none would conclude, on that account, that either of the professions were contemptible. Christianity alone, is obliged to bear all the obloquy incurred by the misconduct of its followers, and to sustain all the reproach brought upon it by ignorant, by fanatical, by superstitious, or hypocritical professors."

On the extremely pernicious and dangerous result of an inconsistent profession of religion, she makes the following powerful and striking remarks. "The effects of the careless conduct of believers on the hearts of others, will probably be a heavy aggravation of their own guilt at the final reckoning:—and there is no negligent Christian can guess where the infection of his example may stop, or how remotely it may be pleaded as a palliation of the sins of others, who either may think themselves safe while they are only doing what Christians allow themselves to do, or he may adduce a Christian's habitual violation of the Divine law as a presumptive evidence that there is no truth in Christianity. This swells the amount of the mischief beyond calculation, and

there is something terrible in the idea of this sort of indefinite evil, that the full extent of the contagion he spreads can never be known. While a man talks like a saint, and yet lives like a sinner; while he professes to believe like an apostle, and yet leads the life of a sensualist; talks of an ardent faith, and yet exhibits a cold and low practice; boasts of being the disciple of a meek Master, and yet is as much a slave to his passions as those who acknowledge no such authority; such a man brings Christianity into disrepute; confirms those in error who ought to have been awakened to conviction; strengthens doubt into unbelief, and hardens indifference into contempt."

After correctly remarking, that "The Christian religion is not intended, as some of its fashionable professors seem to fancy, to operate as a charm, as if it were to produce its effects by the pronouncing of certain mystical words, attending certain consecrated places, and performing certain hallowed ceremonies; but it is an active, vital, influential principle, operating on the heart, restraining the desires, and regulating the conduct," she closes the work by some pointed and justly severe censures on those individuals, who, while they admire Christianity as a system of morals, absurdly deny its Divine authority. "Christianity," she remarks, "must be embraced entirely, if received at all: it must be taken, without mutilation, as a perfect scheme in the way in which God has been pleased to reveal it: it must be accepted not as exhibiting beautiful parts, but as presenting one consummate whole, of which the perfection arises from coherence and dependence, from relation and consistency: its power will be weakened and its energy destroyed, if every caviller pulls out a pin, or obstructs a spring, with the presumptuous view of new-modelling the Divine work, and making it go to his mind. There

must be no breaking this system into portions, of which we are at liberty to choose one, and reject the other. There is no separating the evidence from the doctrines, the doctrines from the precepts, belief from obedience, morality from piety, the love of our neighbour from the love of God. Christianity is something more than a pure set of rules; if not, it surely might have been produced at an infinitely less expense. The long train of prophecy, the succesession of miracles, the labours of the apostles, the blood of the saints, to say nothing of the great and costly sacrifice which the gospel records, might have been spared: lessons of mere human virtue might have been delivered by some suitable instrument of human wisdom, strengthened by the visible authority of human power. A bare system of morals might have been communicated to mankind, with a more reasonable prospect of advantage, by means not so repugnant to human pride. A mere scheme of conduct might have been delivered with far greater probability of success, by Antonius the Emperor, or Plato the philosopher, than by Paul the tent-maker, or Peter the fisherman."

Shortly after the appearance of this publication, Miss More retired to Cowslip Green. She was glad to escape from the world, conformity to which she had denounced as dangerous, and where so many practices prevailed that she had openly condemned. The summer of 1790 was chiefly spent in active efforts to improve the schools she had formed, and in rendering them as extensively useful as possible. Under her judicious superintendence, and that of her sisters, they prospered far beyond their most sanguine expectations. Many, who at first looked upon their effort with feelings very far from friendly, were constrained to acknowledge that they had done no evil, but much good.

A few days before Christmas, 1790, she again be-

came Mrs. Garrick's companion, and remained with her till the ensuing May, spending most of her time at Hampton, and cultivating only an intimacy with individuals of acknowledged piety. She had now almost entirely withdrawn from the world, though her connexions brought her sometimes into contact with it.

Her visits to Mr. Newton became more frequent, and their intimacy ripened into a friendship mutually cordial. On the decease of his wife, which happened about this time, she wrote him a short, but interesting consolatory letter, illustrative alike of her humility, sympathy, and true piety. "I grieve," she writes, "that the sincere and affectionate sympathy I feel in your distress, can afford you no alleviation. I lament the impotence of human friendship, which is, for the most part, obliged to waste itself in idle wishes and fruitless desires, without being of any actual service to those whose sorrows it would gladly relieve. But I check myself for this too hasty expression, for I trust and believe, that the sincere prayers which one Christian (however unworthy he may be) presents to the throne of grace for the sorrows of another, and a better Christian, are not altogether without fruits. It will afford me great satisfaction, to learn that your health has not suffered from this awful and affecting visitation. I trust the consolations of the Almighty will support you, and make your strength equal to your trial. I have been confined, for some weeks, with a severe cough, to which I am subject, and which I ought, and I trust do, in some degree, reckon among my blessings. I am fully persuaded, that 'all things work together for good to them that love God:' my only fear is, that I do not love him cordially, effectually, and entirely."

At the request of Miss More, Cadell had sent Mr. Newton a copy of her last publication, with only the words, "*From the Author*," written on the blank

page. The remarks he made upon it, in his next letter to her, were characteristic and acute. "Among the many good things I received last week, was 'An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable world.' Somebody deserves thanks for the pleasure its perusal gave me; and I conceive, that nobody has a better title to them than yourself. I once received a fairy present *from the author* on 'The Manners of the Great, which cost me nearly a minute's study to determine from whom it came. I hit the right nail on the head at that time, and I am but a poor critic, if they did not both come from the same hand; for while the similarity is strongly marked, there is that difference which might be expected from the difference of time: the former was like the morning spread upon the mountains, which I accepted as the harbinger of advancing day, *Meliora latent*. If any among the fashionable world can be found unprejudiced, the estimate will prove to them as 'a light shining in a dark place,' for which they will have reason to praise God, and to thank the writer. My prayers will be for a blessing upon it, and that in your endeavour to water others, you may yourself be abundantly watered, comforted, and enriched. It is an honour to be able and willing to bear a testimony against evil, and in favour of truth, though it should go no further. We are not answerable for the success, but are bound to make the attempt, as talents and opportunities may be afforded. I trust the unknown, though not unguessed-at author of the 'Estimate,' will hear in that day, 'Forasmuch as it was in thine heart, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.' They who dare to range themselves openly on the Lord's side, shall find, to their comfort, that he will confess them, and appear on their behalf, before the holy angels, and an assembled world at the last day. Then it will be seen who acted the wisest part here."

CHAPTER VIII.

Correspondence with the Rev. John Newton—Providential escape from fire—Diligent and persevering attention to her village schools—Jealous inspection of her motives—Extension of her village labours—Concern for the poor—Indisposition—Increasing desire to be useful—Solemn views of her accountability—Success of her exertions.

THOUGH it was generally believed that Miss More was the author of the 'Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World,' yet she had not acknowledged it, except confidentially to one or two very intimate friends, on whom she had enjoined the strictest secrecy. An incident occurred respecting it, just before she left London, in May 1791, which had nearly led to a breach of the friendship between her and Mr. Newton. Happening to be present with him on one occasion, in a select party, he began incautiously to talk with her upon different parts of the work, as if she had openly claimed the production, though she had only tacitly acknowledged that his surmises were true. If others had not been present it would have occasioned no difficulty, but as individuals were there who were not in the secret, she could only relieve herself from her embarrassment, by abruptly changing the topic of discourse, and with an air of disapprobation, and apparent displeasure, addressing herself to some one else. This she did, though with no wish to wound Mr. Newton's feelings, yet with such apparent indignity, that it occasioned Mr. Newton much uneasiness, lest

he should have unintentionally hurt her feelings and incurred her displeasure. He saw that he had acted incautiously. He knew what Christianity enjoined in circumstances like these, and as no opportunity for setting the matter right presented itself on the occasion, he immediately after the meeting wrote her an explanatory letter, in the course of which he remarks, with great humility and openness, "I should be afraid and ashamed to meet you anywhere till I have asked your pardon for my involuntary blunder of this morning. Indeed I acted in the simplicity of my heart, and was not aware of the impropriety till too late. When I saw the effect I was so confounded that I neither knew how to recede nor how to go forward. I could more easily bear reflecting what an awkward appearance I must have made, if I had not given you pain. What can I say, but that I am sorry, very sorry! A poor amends indeed! But who can recall the day that is past, the bird that is flown, or the word (however foolish) that has once passed the lips. I am obliged to make my humble confession and acknowledgment to-night, that I may in some measure disburden my mind. I will now hope that you have already forgiven me. I believe your goodness would think I have been punished sufficiently if you knew how much I have felt on the occasion. When I considered what I had done, I also considered what is next to be done. It occurred to me immediately, that Miss More is generous and kind; though she has reason to be displeased she is not resentful. If you have offended her go and own your fault; and the next time you see her you may expect a smile, in token that she is not angry. This I have done, making no attempt to gloss over my imprudence by excuses, but simply applying for forgiveness."

Miss More's reply was characteristic of the real

excellence of her disposition, and of the lowly opinion she formed of herself. "Forgive you, my dear sir! No, upon second thoughts I will not, for fancying there was any thing that required to be forgiven. I am sure I shall not easily forgive myself, for behaving so as to encourage in you such an opinion. I am now really hurt for fear you should have attributed my confusion to a wrong motive. If I discovered any embarrassment, the real cause was, that though almost every body knows who wrote that pert little book, and it would be worse than affectation for me to deny it, yet I have been so little in the habit of owning it, that you took me by surprise; and though both of the friends present were apprised of the truth, yet I could not courageously bring myself to talk of it before those gentlemen. This is folly; but the truth is, I feel myself so every way unfit to presume to set up for a teacher of others, that I wish to keep myself in the background. Neither my sex nor my abilities justify me in my own eyes for the things which I attempt, merely because others better qualified will not perform them. All these things rushed into my mind together when you introduced the subject; and operating on my spirits, which were then particularly low, made me appear confused. My concern now is, lest the cause was mistaken, and you thought it arose from my unwillingness to hear of my faults. Oh, my dear sir, think any thing of me rather than that. The more faults you will point out in that book, and in its author, the more you will oblige and gratify me. I am afraid I trust too much to my own strength, and that is the reason why I am so weak. We shall discuss this and many other subjects, I hope, at Cowslip Green."

Offences will unavoidably occur in our present imperfect state. Very often they are the occasion of much bitterness of spirit, even though incident-

ally and unintentionally given. But where the conduct is regulated by Christian principles, where the mild, pacific genius of the gospel is allowed to exert itself, and the sublime, perfect system of morals which it enforces, is practically obeyed, where no evil, or spiteful, or revengeful feelings, are harboured; but a spirit of meekness, forbearance, and forgiveness is cultivated; where, in fact, there is a disposition, not only to harbour no unkind or suspicious feeling, but, instead of returning evil for evil, or railing for railing, to return blessing for cursing, to pray even for our enemies, to put the best construction upon the conduct of others, and to form humbling views of ourselves, offences will soon cease to exist.

About the last week in May, 1791, Miss More returned to her favourite retreat, and resumed with increasing diligence her exertions to instruct and benefit the surrounding peasantry. But she deemed it not enough to impart to them temporal benefits. In a letter to Mr. Newton, who had kindly promised to pay her a visit in August or September, she thus incidentally expresses her concern for their spiritual instruction. "As you give me the privilege of choosing between the months you have named, you will not wonder that I prefer the former, were it only because it is the nearest; and it is the natural bent of selfish human nature always to make sure of a good thing as soon as possible. As early, then, in August, as may fall in with your general projects, we shall rejoice to see you; and as soon as you have made your arrangements, you will be so good as to let me know your time, that I may order my other little matters accordingly, for having a good many little schemes and desires in my head, I shall contrive to work the harder before your appearance, that I may afford to give myself some holidays while you are here. Pray let me know

what time you intend to bestow upon us; the more the better. I hope you will do some good in this dark region, where the light of Christianity seems scarcely to have penetrated. We are sending missionaries, while our villagers are perishing for lack of knowledge."

At the close of this letter, Miss More gratefully relates a providential escape from fire, which she had recently experienced. "I must not conclude without expressing my thankfulness to the Almighty, that my little cottage is left standing to receive you in; it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. My house has been on fire. Silently did it burn the whole night, and had so nearly burned through the beams of the ceiling as to reach within a few inches of my sister's bed, where she lay unconscious of her danger. But we were not, I trust, insensible of our deliverance, which was indeed most providential, for, had the fire broken out, there was no water at hand."

Mr. Newton's visit to Cowslip Green afforded him a degree of satisfaction far beyond his most sanguine expectations. He was delighted to witness the zealous, persevering efforts made by Miss More and her sisters, to instruct and improve the surrounding peasantry. He rode with them over the mountains, for their field of labour extended near ten miles, and by his judicious counsel and excellent remarks stimulated them to increased exertions. In a letter written a day or two after his visit, adverting to the sacrifices of time and of taste the noble course she was pursuing required her to make, he writes—"When I think of your turn of mind, what you give up, what hardships and fatigue, not to say danger you expose yourself to, for the instruction of the ignorant and the relief of the wretched; knowing, as I do well, that the Lord whom you serve has given you the grace of humility, so

that, far from valuing yourself upon your exertions, you can sit down at his feet, ashamed, and sorry that you can do no more, I adore and praise him who has put it into your heart, has strengthened your hands, and has hitherto prepared your way. I am not often charged with flattery, and here I mean not to flatter, but to encourage you in the name of the Lord. He has highly honoured you, my dear madam: He has allotted you a post of great importance, and for which no person in the kingdom except yourself has such advantages. Zeal, perhaps, sufficient to attempt something in the same way, may be found, but other requisites are wanting; should a prudent minister attempt such an extensive inroad into the kingdom of darkness, he might expect such opposition as few could withstand. But your sex and your character afford you a peculiar protection. Those who would try to trample one of us in the dust, will be ashamed *openly* to oppose *you*. I say *openly*, because you must not expect they will thank, much less assist even you. What a world do we live in, that it should require a good degree of resolution and grace to be able to say, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, which is indeed the brightest display of the wisdom, love, power, and glory of God. But though it is the highest object of admiration to all superior intelligences, the greatest part of mankind are ashamed of it. Where there is a difference, grace alone has made it, for by nature we are no wiser nor better than others. What shall we render to the Lord for all his mercies? I trust you can look up to the Saviour, and view him as beholding you, placing the prize before you, and saying, 'Fear none of these things: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.'"

Animated by reflections thus encouraging, Miss More pursued her career of usefulness with undimi-

nished activity, and she had the satisfaction to see it followed by the happiest results. On one occasion, while in pursuit of her benevolent object, an accident befel her which might have proved serious, but from which she happily escaped unhurt. In a letter to Mr. Newton she thus gratefully alludes to the circumstance. "I should have thanked you sooner for your very agreeable letter, but have been a good deal indisposed by a cold caught by walking over our mountains late last night, which I was compelled to do by a frightful accident of a horse falling, but without doing me the least harm. Not a bone of me was broken. This is the second striking deliverance I have had within two months. I hope I am not unthankful to Divine Providence, though I grieve to say my cold heart is not so much animated by a sense of these great mercies as by the comparatively small favours I receive from poor frail mortals like myself."

Deliverance from the dangers incident to life are too often regarded either as mere matters of chance, or as affairs too trifling to merit notice. Men generally overlook the fact, that the unerring Providence of God directs and controuls all events be they great or small. One of the first fruits of piety (and it is of a kind which yields to the mind the most refined pleasure) is a distinct acknowledgment that all occurrences, whether they concern individuals or communities, are at the disposal of infinite wisdom. Those who really love God, feel a *practical* conviction that the very hairs of their head are numbered, and that not even a sparrow falls to the ground unnoticed by their heavenly Father. Hence the smallest favours are gratefully acknowledged as coming from his hand. These had long been the views of Miss More, but she now more than ever practically realized their value; probably owing, in some degree, at least, to the excellent letters she

received from Mr. Newton, in which this important truth was never overlooked.

Painful as is the admission, yet is it a fact, of which, alas! there are too many living proofs, that there may be much zeal for the advancement of piety in others where but little of its power is felt. Though it is pleasing to see individuals, especially if they happen to be distinguished for talent and influence, exerting themselves in promoting the spread of Christianity, yet it is by no means an infallible criterion to judge whether they live personally in the enjoyment of its blessings. Many have instrumentally inclined others to pursue the path of life, while they have themselves been heedlessly pursuing the broad way to ruin. Motives of interest or ambition have urged them forward in their useful course, while they have been regardless altogether of the state of their own hearts. Such was far from being the case with Miss More. No one could inspect more carefully or jealously the mind's movements. "I thank you very cordially," she writes to Mr. Newton, "for the encouragement you give me, and the kind assurance of being remembered in your prayers. Though I am not, thank God, what is called low-spirited, yet my spirits are not strong. From the make of my mind I am too easily acted upon by things without: this is partly owing to that natural infirmity which those who flatter us call sensibility, and partly to a weak faith, and the little progress I have made in the Divine life. I live in the hope of growing every year wiser and better, but that hope has been hitherto so little realized, that it would be quite faint were it not sometimes refreshed by those gracious promises so frequently held forth to us. I feel I do nothing, and the motives of my best actions (I use that epithet only comparatively) are not pure; some human mixtures, some debasing alloys enter into those things

which appear to others the most commendable. I am anxious about events, which yet I know to be in higher and far better hands; I *do* not bend my own to the Divine will; and I feel an impatience under such dispensations as are against my liking. Things which do not really cross me I bear well enough, and thence get a good deal of commendation, which I do not merit."

Encouraged by the success of their exertions in the villages where they had commenced their system of education, Miss More and her sisters determined, during the summer of 1791, although they had schools in at least six parishes, to extend still further their benevolent operations. To this they were prompted by the lamentable state of the peasantry in some villages adjoining. The inhabitants in one or two parishes were, in fact, little better than a herd of ruffians. So ferocious was their character, that though they were frequently committing acts of violence the most daring, yet it was with the umost difficulty and danger they could be brought to justice. On Miss More's expressing a desire to establish a school in that most unpromising spot, all her friends earnestly dissuaded her from making the attempt, not only because of the improbability of its being successful, but because of the danger attending even making the effort. Acting, however, on the principle that the greater degree of ignorance there was, the more needful was it to give instruction; and hoping that as many of the obstacles they had met with in other places had soon disappeared, so they would do in this case, she determined to proceed. The result proved that she was right. A spot where all was misery, confusion, and riot, became in a few months, by the feeble efforts of one or two unprotected females, transformed into a peaceful, industrious village; parents as well as their children, and adults

of both sexes and of all ages, were benefited by the change.

She wisely connected religious instruction with education, aware that the latter without the former was nearly as dangerous as it was useful. Their plan was, to have a Sunday evening service, for religious worship, at which any person was permitted to attend. A portion of the Scriptures was first read, then a suitable prayer, previously composed, was offered up, after that a plain, short sermon was read, and the meeting closed. One of the sisters usually officiated on these occasions. They each took a share in the labours alternately; and as the distance from Cowslip-green was too far for them to return the same evening, they slept at some house in the village. In a letter to Mr. Wilberforce describing the origin and success of these endeavours, Miss More writes, "It was, at first, thought very methodistical, and we got a few broken windows, but quiet perseverance carried us through. Many reprobates were, by the blessing of God, awakened, and many swearers and sabbath-breakers reclaimed. The numbers both of young and old scholars increased, and the daily life and conversation of many seemed to keep pace with their religious profession on the Sunday. We now begin to distribute Bibles and prayer-books, with some other religious publications, but never at random, and only to those who had given some evidence of their loving and deserving them. They are always made the reward of superior learning, or some other merit, and those who are the most diligent get the best books." By a perseverance in these simple means, did Miss More and her sisters do incalculable good among a population the most degraded; giving additional proof how much may be done in promoting the instruction and comfort of mankind, by a class of individuals who

think themselves exonerated from all responsibility because of their imagined incapacity.

But Miss More did not content herself with giving these villagers education and religious instruction alone. Though these were her chief, they were not her only objects; she knew that these blessings would, in the end, be productive of their temporal as well as their spiritual benefit: yet she wisely sought at once to improve their worldly circumstances, and conceiving that the best means to reform them, was to put them in a way of mutually assisting each other, she established societies among them for this purpose. Her account of them to Mr. Wilberforce is interesting. "Finding the wants and distresses of these poor people uncommonly great, (for their wages are but one shilling a day,) and fearing to abuse the bounty of my friends, by too indiscriminate liberality, it occurred to me, that I could make what I had to bestow go much further by instituting clubs, or societies, for the women, as is done for the men in other places. It was no small trouble to accomplish this, for though the subscriptions were only three-halfpence a week, it was more than they could always raise; yet the object appeared so important that I found it would be good economy, privately to give widows and women who were very poor the money to pay their club. After combating many prejudices, we carried this point, which we took care to involve in the general system, by making it subservient to the schools, the rules of the club restraining the women to a certain line of conduct respecting the schools. In some parishes we have one hundred and fifty poor women thus associated; we have an anniversary feast of tea, and I get some of the clergy, and a few of the better sort of people to come to it. Among the collateral advantages resulting from these clubs, one is, that the women, who used to

plead that they could not come to church, because they had no clothes, now are seldom absent. The necessity of attending public worship with us in the procession on the anniversary, raises an honest ambition to provide something decent to wear, and the churches are now filled on a Sunday with clean-looking women."

The expense of establishing and keeping up these schools, though in every thing the most rigid economy was studied, was very considerable, far exceeding what the Miss Mores could be expected to pay out of their own income. They were responsible for the debts incurred, and besides their exertions, they had to contribute largely towards liquidating them, though they were most liberally supported by their friends. That the schools were really needed is clear from the gross ignorance that prevailed among the population previous to their establishment. "Not one," says Miss More, "out of more than a hundred children in one parish, could tell who made them." Her feelings and those of her sister must have been most gratifying to witness the gradual disappearance of this dense cloud of darkness, through the divine blessing on their exertions. The anniversary celebration, which she playfully describes in a letter to Mrs. Kennicott, must have been to them in the highest degree pleasing. "I have kept this scrawl," she writes, "some days for want of time to finish it; so busy have we been in preparing for a grand celebrity, distinguished by the pompous name of *Mendip Feast*—the range of hills you remember in this country, on the top of which we yesterday gave a dinner of beef and plum-pudding and cider to our schools. There were not quite six hundred children, for I would not admit the new schools, telling them they must be good for a year or two, to be entitled to so good a thing as a dinner. We had two tents

pitched on the hill; our cloth was spread around, and we were inclosed in a fence, within which, in a circle, the children sat. We all went in waggons, and carried a large company of our own to carve for the children, who sang psalms very prettily in the intervals. Curiosity had drawn a great multitude for a country so thinly populated; five thousand was the estimated number present. Nearly all the clergy of the neighbourhood came, and I requested a separate minister to say grace for each parish. At the conclusion, I permitted a general chorus of 'God save the King' to be sung, telling them that loyalty should make a part of their religion. We all parted with the most perfect peace, having fed about nine hundred people, for less than a fine dinner for twenty would cost." It would be far from desirable, on all similar occasions, that children should sing this national anthem, as it would impart to such meetings a political rather than a religious character. But the public mind was then in a high state of excitement, owing to the unhappy turn which affairs were taking in France; hence this public exhibition of loyalty was not inappropriate.

The extraordinary exertions of Miss More, in this good cause, during the summer and autumn, with her frequent exposure to the night air, occasioned by her journeys, proved at length too much for her delicate health, and brought on an attack of illness, which compelled her to retire to Bath to recruit her strength. In an interesting letter to an intimate friend, she thus describes the state of her mind:— "In looking back upon the past year, I see so much to be thankful for, that my heart is full of gratitude, and so much to be humbled for, that it is full of sorrow and self-abasement. The waters, I think, are doing me good, and I have been very much better since I came into close winter-quarters, owing, under God, to my being quite shut up.

Much as I love air and exercise, the loss of them is but a petty sacrifice to what many are called to make. But my days are sadly laid open to the inroads of all manner of invaders of time. As it is known I return no visits, I am therefore supposed to be always at home. Now a party comes recommended by some friend; these must be seen for the friend's sake. Then come some old friends of my own. Occasionally, indeed, there is a little chance of being useful, and I feel obliged to lend myself to the most distant claim of this sort. Of a few young ladies I have some sort of hope;—but, in general, it is an unpleasant loss of time." Of this evil many besides Miss More have had much cause to complain. It is one of the greatest annoyances which individuals who devote their time and talents to the public have to endure. Persons of this description have neither opportunity nor taste for the vapid discourse of idle visitors. Those who pursue literature as a profession, or even only as a mere matter of taste, complain of it as an inconvenience the most vexatious. Others, who, like Miss More, regard themselves as responsible to the highest tribunal for the right use of their talents, view the matter in a more serious light.

Such was evidently the view entertained by Miss More of her individual accountability. All that she could do, by any possibility, towards promoting the instruction and happiness of mankind, she not only thought it right to attempt, but deemed it culpable to neglect. Hence, though she was then suffering from the effects of her exertions, her ever active mind was devising schemes to extend still further her village exertions. In the letter last quoted, she writes: "I am thankful for the prospect of laying in a little health for future services, for I have partly pledged myself, in my own mind, if I live and have health, and money, and the French do not come, to

take up two new parishes next spring; but as they are four miles below Cheddar, I have never yet dared to reveal to any one my intention. I know sloth and self-love will say, 'Spare thyself;' and I feel the extreme concern it will give those to whom I could wish to give nothing but pleasure; but I have counted the cost. These parishes are large and populous, they are as dark as Africa; and I do not like the thought that, at the day of judgment, any people should be found to have perished who were within my possible reach, and only that I might have a little more ease." This, it will probably be said, is viewing the subject in a light much too serious. It may be so, to the narrow contracted feelings of our fallen nature, but is it not in accordance with the self-denying truths taught by the Redeemer? We may not have it in our power, personally, to do any thing for our fellow-men, but no one can be a Christian who is destitute of the spirit that would prompt him to do it, were his circumstances favourable.

Miss More did not visit London this winter. As soon as she became convalescent she repaired to her favourite cottage, and resumed her benevolent exertions. The first thing she did, after visiting each of the schools, was to make preparations for carrying into effect the projected extension of her labours. She paid a visit to the neighbourhood where she contemplated commencing her exertions. Her account of this visit is interesting, as illustrative of the spirit of the day. Happily for us, though men are not more in love with real piety, yet they are much more tolerant. "We went down on Sunday to reconnoitre the prevalent spirit in the spot of our newly contemplated operations. If any thing is to be done it must be through the very fire. We had borrowed the pulpit for a friend, but the opposition we met with, so damped his spirits, that he had not courage

to preach. B——, however, had prepared a judicious sermon. The great man of the place, illiterate but sensible, is a shrewd, speculative atheist. The next, a farmer of £1000 a year, gave me to understand that we should not come there to make his ploughmen wiser than himself; he did not want saints but workmen. His wife, who, though she cannot read, seems to understand the doctrine of philosophical necessity, said the lower classes were fated to be poor, and ignorant, and wicked, and that wise as we were, we could not alter what was decreed. Before we went to church all these encouraging things were conveyed to us. During the service I took out my pencil and wrote across the church to B——, to be sure to mention in his sermon, that the ladies would defray all the expences, that they wanted nothing of the parish, but their countenance. This bright thought had a most happy effect: B—— repeated thrice that no subscriptions would be asked, and every heart was cheered, and every eye brightened. After sermon, we had an hour or two's discussion on the subject. Several of the opponents to the measure became softened, and declared that they had no objection to the ladies coming: one rich man even clapped his hands, and said he hoped it would turn out a good job. It was affecting to see the poor stand trembling behind, lest the project should fail." Schools were introduced on this spot, which were followed by success far exceeding their expectations.

Difficulties of a kind not altogether unlooked for, connected with the schools first established, now began to appear, which required the exercise of sound discretion and judgment to provide against. Among those who had been educated in her schools, many young persons of both sexes had become truly pious. In these there was, as is mostly the case, a great diversity of temperament, calling for a correspondent

variety of treatment. And as she was the presiding genius of the whole, all looked to her for counsel. To these difficulties and the anxiety thereby occasioned, she thus adverts in one of her letters, piously ascribing all that had been done, not to her own efforts but to the blessing of God. "The weather has, for the last ten days, enabled us to prosecute our labours with more ease. I ought thankfully to acknowledge that, on the whole, our work is going on prosperously. Who does not clearly see that the work is entirely of God, when he is pleased to do it by such poor instruments? It seems a paradox to say that we have more difficulty and anxiety now, in this advanced stage of our progress than we had years ago, and that we have most to do now in those parishes where, by the blessing of God, we have seen the greatest improvement. But so it is. There is great delicacy required in the management of our young converts. Some of them are very sincere, devout, and holy in their lives, but they now and then fall into a zeal so fiery that it wants cooling, and then they relapse into dejection and sadness on finding that earth is not heaven, and that they must submit to carry about with them human infirmity, and be still struggling against sin and temptation as long as they live in this world. I have, however, the comfort to say, that hardly any of them have fallen back into sinful courses, and many, I trust very many, are striving after excellence."

The piety Miss More wished her converts to possess was, like her own, as diverse from thoughtless levity as from religious austerity. The errors of her converts in these respects occasioned her much anxiety. "It is curious," she writes, "to see the ignorant, undisciplined mind falling into the same errors, and diverging into the same eccentricities with philosophers and divines Some of our poor youths, who did not know their letters when we took them in

hand, have fallen into some of the peculiarities of William Law, without ever having heard that there was such a man in the world; and I fear they judge unfavourably of my zeal, because I have refused to publish a severe edict against the sin of wearing flowers; which would be ridiculous enough in me who passionately love them. I find it necessary in some instances to encourage cheerfulness, as austerities are insisted on by some of them rather of a serious nature."

It is interesting to discern the lively interest Miss More took in the prosperity of these institutions. Every part of their discipline was under her inspection. She laboured indefatigably to improve them and to make them the means of conveying lasting good to the poor. All her plans were so devised as to have a decided bearing on their spiritual as well as their temporal interests. "One great object," she says, "in our establishment of the poor women's clubs, has been to back with penal statutes the religious instruction of the schools." Attention like this to so many institutions, must often have been most harassing. "The worst part of our business," she writes, "is having so many places to look after, each one being at a considerable distance from the other:—when all goes on smoothly at one place something breaks out in another, and hinders the instruction of the children and the parents. To teach the teachers is not the least part of the work; add to this that having about thirty masters and mistresses, with many under-teachers, one has continually to bear with the faults, the ignorance, the prejudices, humours, and misfortunes of all these poor, well-meaning people. But I hope it teaches me forbearance, and serves to put me in mind how much God has to bear with from me. I now and then comfort Patty, in our journeys home at night, by remarking, that if we do these people no good, I hope we do some little good to ourselves."

Harassing and perplexing as she sometimes felt this work, yet she greatly preferred it to the pleasures of worldly gaiety. "I desire," she says, "to have little to do with the great. I have devoted the remnant of my life to the poor, and those that have no helper; and if I can do them little good, I can at least sympathise with them, and I know it is some comfort for a forlorn creature to be able to say, there is somebody that cares for me. The simple idea of being *cared for* has always appeared to me a very cheering one. Besides this, the affection the poor have for me is a strong engine with which to lift them up to the love of higher things. And though I believe others work successfully by terrors, yet kindness is the instrument with which God has enabled me to work."

CHAPTER IX.

Apprehended opposition to her village labours—Indefatigable exertions in her schools—Indisposition, and retirement to Bath—Death of Bishop Horne—His character—Illness and death of a young lady—Again visits London—Exertions in behalf of two females—Visits Fulham—Village Politics—Reply to Dupont's atheistic speech—Conduct towards her opponents—Monthly Repository—Extent of its circulation—Riot among the colliers—Christian conduct and deep concern to be useful.

VERY early in the spring of 1792, Miss More had the mortification to learn that attempts had been made to open a house for preaching in the village of Cheddar, where one of her most useful schools was established, and where she thought no additional religious instruction was needed. Charges have been made (in some cases not falsely) against many excellent individuals, who have been anxious, sometimes from the best of motives, to promote the diffusion of Christian principles, that instead of directing their efforts to spots where they were really wanted, they have too often intrenched, unjustly, upon the labours of their Christian brethren; who though not precisely of the same religious community, were such as agreed with them on all the essential points of Christianity. Hence their exertions have appeared more like opposition to those who were engaged in the same cause, than like well-directed efforts to diffuse Christian knowledge; presenting to the view

of the world, much to their gratification, but greatly to the disparagement of Christianity, the unsightly aspect of Christians who are really such, being, from mistaken motives, engaged in what has at least the appearance of hostility.

It must be acknowledged a nice point, to determine in all cases, under what circumstances Christians of different communities may open places for public worship, without justly incurring the charge of opposition. Probably, in many instances where there is the appearance of hostility, the grounds of interference, were they coolly examined, would be seldom perfectly justifiable. Invitations may have been given by persons of piety and respectability, with which it would be improper not to comply; but generally it must be admitted to be unwise, to say nothing further, for any denomination of Christians to interfere with the efforts of another, in any place where there is only a limited population. That Miss More thought this was the case on the present occasion, will be seen by the following remarks: "I think it right, that you should know what a sad spirit sets these seceders at work: they do not, now, so much go to places which are in darkness and ignorance, as they once professed to do, but rather where the gospel is preached, in order to draw people away from the church. I begin to fear they will quite knock up our labours at Cheddar; but we must strive the harder. I leave you to judge whether they are wanted at that place. Poor D—— preaches most faithfully to them on Sundays, and gives them a lecture on Tuesday evenings, all for twenty-five pounds per annum. We have, at the school, a sermon read on the Sunday evening, with a select meeting, of the most serious, on Wednesdays: add to this, that both D—— and our excellent Mrs. T—— at the school, have their doors open at all seasons for the distressed or enquiring."

In the opinion of Miss More, whether well or ill-formed, this opposition was occasioned by her known aversion to bigotry. Although she refused to be the adherent of any religious party, yet her liberality was not of that spurious kind which attaches no importance to correct views on the fundamental points of the Christian system. While she conscientiously preferred communion with the Establishment, she admired and practised many things which she saw in other Christian communities. Adverting to what she imagined to be the results of such a course, she remarks: "The sectaries are more inflamed against me than even the high church-bigots: such an inconvenience is it to belong to no party, and so discreditable is moderation. A high-flyer told me, the other day, he would advise me to publish a short confession of my faith, as my attachment both to the religion and the government of the country had become questionable to many persons. I own I was rather glad to hear it, as I was afraid I had leaned too strongly to the other side, and had sometimes gone out of my way to show on which side my inclination lay."

After a few weeks' exertions in the villages, Miss More became so much indisposed, as to be again compelled to repair to Bath: she had only been there a few days, when she received the mournful tidings of Bishop Horne's death, one of her most valued correspondents: he had repaired to Bath for the benefit of his health, and was recovering, when he suddenly relapsed, and in a few days expired. It afforded Miss More great satisfaction to learn that this excellent prelate died as he lived, an honour to his Christian profession. In her letters, she adverts to the event with much Christian sympathy, for the surviving relatives, and at the same time gives her opinion of the bishop's piety. "I hope your mind is somewhat prepared for the sad

news I have to impart to you: but your mind is so schooled and broken to losses and afflictions, that I believe it is always in some degree of preparedness to receive them. You will too naturally conclude, that this is a prelude to the closing scene of our beloved friend the Bishop of Norwich: he was so much better a few days ago, that I was expecting he would have sent for me to sit with him in the evening; but Patty called yesterday, and found him actually dying. He had just received the sacrament with his family, with extraordinary devotion: every word he uttered, every text he repeated, consisted of praise and the most devout thankfulness. He took leave of all, separately; exhorted and blessed them, and calmly expired, pronouncing the words, 'Blessed Jesus!' A more delightful or edifying death-bed cannot well be imagined. As I contemplated the dead body of my beloved bishop, I could not help reflecting to what a mind it had belonged. How wise, how witty, how pleasant, and how good he was, we shall all often remember. We ought to rejoice that he is released from a painful and burdensome body: and surely we do rejoice, that his death was so consistent with his life, and that he honoured the Christian profession with his dying breath."

Miss More's efforts to soothe the minds of the Bishop's surviving relatives were incessant. While seeking to comfort them, which none could do better than herself, she was summoned to the death-bed of a young lady, who in the morning of life was called to render up her final account, and who met death with Christian magnanimity. Her disease was of a nature the most painful, and she was one, as Miss More remarks, on whom the consoling power of religion was strikingly displayed. "So shy, reserved, cold, and hesitating was she in her natural manner, that few ever discovered, what a close intimacy with her for a considerable time enabled me to discover,—

a most accomplished mind, hidden beneath a thick veil of humility. But such was the happy change religion had produced in her character, that in the near prospect of eternity she acquired a sort of religious courage, an animated manner, and a ready eloquence, which were all used as a means for awakening others."

As this young lady had only her sister to attend her, Miss More, though far from well herself, kindly offered her assistance on this trying occasion, lest the keen anguish of the sufferer, in the paroxysms of her disorder, should overwhelm her sister, which seemed not improbable, so great was their severity. Though, as the poet sings,

> "The chamber where the good man meets his fate
> Is privileged beyond the common walk
> Of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven;"

yet it was only Christian sympathy, of the purest kind, that could have prompted Miss More, to have witnessed a scene so truly distressing as this must have been to her sensitive mind. Her account of the Christian courage and strong fath displayed by this young lady under circumstances the most trying is touching and interesting. "The make of her mind," she writes, "particularly exempted her from even the suspicion of enthusiasm." There was little ardour in her temper, her affections were rather languid, and there was not an atom of fever in her complaint; so that her head was never more clear, nor her judgment more sound. When I expressed my concern that her sufferings were prolonged, she said, she saw clearly the wisdom of that dispensation, for if she had been taken away in the beginning of her illness, she should have wanted much of that purification she now felt, and of those clear and strong views, which now supported her. In the night on which she died, she called us all about her, and with an energy of spirit quite unlike

herself, she cried out in an animated tone, 'Be witnesses all of you, that I bear my dying testimony to the truth of my Christian profession. I am divinely supported, and have almost a foretaste of heaven.' After this she experienced an hour of suffering as exquisite as ever human nature sustained, and I hope I shall never forget, that when to save myself the pain of witnessing her unutterable agonies, I wrapped my face in the curtain, I heard her broken, almost inarticulate voice, repeatedly crying 'Let patience have its perfect work. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him: Thy will, not mine be done.' This, with a fervent ejaculation to be kept from the power of darkness, she repeated till her strength failed. Her prayer was heard, and her last hour was so peaceful, that we knew not when she sunk to her everlasting rest."

Miss More's exertions to soothe the mind of this Christian sufferer in her last struggles, and to administer suitable consolation to the surviving sister, must have been most trying. But this she regarded not, though none could have felt it more keenly. Her object was to act the part of the good Samaritan, both to the living and the dying, and to learn those lessons from the event, which trials of this kind are designed and calculated to teach. "Instead of fearing," she says "that this last scene should be too affecting, I am only dreading (such is the levity of my nature) that it will escape from my memory before it has done its errand on my heart."

Shortly after the decease of this young lady, Miss More complied with the pressing invitations of her London friends to pay them a visit; but her continuance with them was shorter than on any former occasion. She had scarcely arrived when her benevolent sympathies were exerted in behalf of an interesting young heiress, whom she well knew, who had been trepanned from school by a heartless libertine,

at the early age of fourteen. Such was the interest she took in this affair, that she determined at all hazards, if possible, to discover the place of her concealment, and to effect her rescue. That she might not fail in her object, she entered immediately on the work, without calling on one of her friends. In a letter to Mrs. Kennicott, she thus adverts to the affair: "Could you form the faintest idea of the life I have led, the scenes I have witnessed, and the company I have kept, since I came to town, you would cease to wonder at my unnatural silence. My time has been literally passed with thief-takers, officers of justice, and such pretty kind of people. I have made no visits, but snatched a hasty kind of dinner in Cavendish-square, or at London House, in my dishabille. Our share in the business being only to identify the dear little girl, the lawyers with all their professional nonchalance, coolly directed us to betray no emotion, nor to discover ourselves in case we found them. You know, I believe, my silly fear of fire arms—it is inexpressible: what therefore made these visits so particularly distressing to me, was the assurance that P—— never sat without a pistol on the table, which he seized at every noise. Each morning presents some fresh pursuit, and each day closes in disappointment; you may believe that nothing would justify these exertions, on our part, but the deepest persuasion of the sweet child's innocence. She was most timid, gentle, and pious. How far the endearments and flattery of a wretch, who they say is specious, may have corrupted her in five weeks I tremble to think, but though I shall mourn that our exertions have not been successful, I shall not regret having made them."

The real goodness of Miss More's disposition was again displayed, though in a different way, a few days afterwards. De Lolme, the author of the

Treatise on the English Constitution, had, by his extravagance, involved himself in difficulties and was then in prison for debt. Hearing that Miss More was lodging in a house not far from the prison, he obtained leave of absence, waited upon her, candidly stated his circumstances, and solicited her assistance. Her account of the circumstance is illustrative alike of her prudence and generosity, proving that while she wished to relieve him in a way the least grating to his feelings, she was anxious to do it so that it might afford him comforts for some weeks at least. "Poor De Lolme has called upon me. He is in prison, but obtained leave to come this distance. I have lodged, from myself and others five guineas in Elmley's hands, which he is to give him, one at a time, without hinting that it comes through me. He is, I fear, inconsiderate and forgetful of what concerns him, but so are some others who yet have very good dinners to eat. I think it cruel, that a foreigner who has done so much honour to our country, by his work on the Constitution of England, which has been repeatedly quoted in both houses of parliament, should be suffered to starve.

Only a day or two after performing this generous action, before she had time to visit many of her friends, her sympathies were again called into exercise in behalf of an unhappy young female, a victim of seduction, who, in a fit of desperation, had been seen to throw herself into the canal in St. James's Park, and who was with great difficulty got out. She was apparently dead, and in a few minutes more must have been so entirely; but, on the usual means being employed, animation was restored. Miss More was staying at Mrs. Clark's, sister to the late Mr. Wilberforce, when she first heard of this event. She immediately framed the design of attempting to rescue this young fe-

male, though an entire stranger, from her ruinous course; and, accompanied by Mrs. Clark, set out to the Middlesex Hospital, whither she had been removed. "On arriving there," she states, in her own relation of the affair, "we found she had just been carried in a hackney-coach to her lodgings, in a street of very bad fame. Nothing intimidated, we followed her. On reaching the house where she resided, and enquiring for her, she came down to us, looking deadly pale; her fine hair was still drenched with the water. We told her we came as friends, and begged to know how we could serve her. She said her father had sold her, at sixteen, to a fellow-prisoner in the King's Bench, after having given her a lady's education, which her language and manners confirmed. Mrs. Clark and I were so much affected by her story, that we staid some hours with her, offered to provide for her, if she would abandon her present mode of life, engaged to pay her debts, and at last prevailed upon her to quit her lodgings. She consented in an agony of mind; and even when we thought ourselves sure of her, she determined to return again for the chance of seeing her betrayer, protesting, however, that we should see her again the next day. This we much doubted, but she kept her word. We have put her in a lodging near us, and are looking out for a situation for her, but are by no means sure of her going on well." It is painful to add that these apprehensions were but too well founded. This young female, named H. Lester, then only eighteen, contrived shortly afterwards to elope from her lodgings, and again followed her vicious courses. She afterwards wrote Miss More several very sensible letters, lamenting her inability to break from her evil habits; and such was the interest Miss More took in her welfare, notwithstanding her base conduct, that she generously promised to receive her, should she ever feel a desire really to

abandon her vicious courses. Whether she ever did so or not is unknown.

Miss More did not remain long in London on this occasion. Her mind was now too intensely fixed in the pursuit of her benevolent course to derive pleasure from visits, which consumed much time, and could answer no valuable end. With Bishop Porteus, however, she spent some days at Fulham, very delightfully, before she returned home. The bishop knew that her favourite subject was the best means of benefitting mankind, according to circumstances of time and place. He had formed the highest opinion of her talents as a popular writer, and he now urged her seriously, on conscientious grounds, for the public good, to compose and publish some tracts adapted to counteract the spread of infidelity among the middling and lower classes, which then threatened, unless something was done by individuals who possessed the talent to avert the evil, to produce the same dreadful results in England as they had occasioned in France.

The humble estimate Miss More formed of her acquirements, induced her to decline making this attempt, though she was urged to it, not only by the bishop, but by all her friends, many of whom wrote her pressing letters on the subject. She acknowledged its necessity and importance, but excused herself from attempting it, on the ground of imagined incapacity. On arriving, however, at Cowslip Green, finding that the public mind was still in a high state of excitement, and that sceptical publications were most industriously circulated, seriously thought that it was at least her duty to attempt something. She immediately commenced writing a tract for the purpose: it was in the form of a dialogue, and was entitled 'Village Politics.' The plan was happily conceived, and the style admirably suited to the purpose. That none might suspect who was the

author, she sent it to Rivington's, instead of employing her own publisher.

The account she gives, in a letter to Mrs. Boscawen, of the origin of this tract, is characteristic and interesting:—"As soon as I came to Bath, our dear Bishop of London came to me with a dismal countenance, and told me that I should repent it on my death-bed, if I, who knew so much of the habits and sentiments of the lower orders of people, did not write some little thing tending to open their eyes, under their present wild impressions of liberty and equality. It must be something level to their apprehensions, or it would be of no use. In an evil hour I consented, against my will and my judgment: on one sick day I scribbled a little pamphlet, called 'Village Politics, by Will Chip;' and the very next morning sent it off to Rivington, changing my bookseller the more surely to escape detection. It is as vulgar as heart can wish, but it is only designed for the most vulgar class of readers. I heartily hope I shall not be discovered, as it is a sort of writing repugnant to my taste, though indeed it is rather a question of peace than of politics."

It was not long before most of her friends discovered to whose pen they were indebted for 'Village Politics,' the sale of which was rapid and extensive. It was read by all ranks: hundreds were distributed by different gentlemen in their own neighbourhood. And though many excellent publications, intended to have the same effect, had been issued by Watson, Paley, and others, yet there was none, perhaps, so completely adapted to the class of readers for which they were designed, nor so likely to answer their purpose as 'Village Politics.' The dialogistic style, of all others the most interesting to the lower classes, became, in Miss More's hands, the most interesting: Bishop Porteus was delighted that he had succeeded in bringing out a talent into

exercise, which seemed to answer every purpose. Writing to her on the subject, he remarks:—" 'Village Politics' is universally extolled: it has been read and greatly admired at Windsor, and its fame is spreading rapidly over all parts of the kingdom. Mr. Cambridge says that Swift could not have done better. I am perfectly of that opinion; it is a masterpiece of its kind. I congratulate myself on having drawn out a new talent in you, and on having thereby done much good to my country.

This excellent prelate, having thus successfully, and to so good a purpose, exerted his influence with Miss More, thought it advisable to make an attempt to engage her again to write on the same subject. To accomplish this, he sent her a copy of M. Dupont's speech before the French National Convention, in which religion was openly traduced, and Deism publicly defended, earnestly requesting her to compose and publish a reply. The manner in which he enforced his request was too serious to be disregarded. " I have been," writes his lordship, " repeatedly asked whether you would not once more, in this alarming state of things, exert your superior talents in His cause who gave you them. I do in my conscience think you bound to do so. I will venture to say that the eyes of many are fixed on you at this important crisis, and I cannot help considering this general concurrence of the wise and the good, in looking up to you on this occasion, as a kind of call upon you from Heaven, which I am sure you will not feel yourself disposed to withstand. There is no occasion to enter particularly into any thing controversial or doctrinal, but simply to draw out a very plain summary of the evidences of Christianity, brought down to the level of Will Chip and Jack Anvil, exactly as you have done in ' Village Politics,' to which village Christianity would be a very becoming companion."

The result of this appeal was the production of an excellent pamphlet, entitled, ' Remarks on the Speech of Mr. Dupont, on the subject of Religion and Public Education.' Prefixed to it was an address, most feelingly written, on behalf of the French emigrant clergy, many of them excellent, though mistaken men, whose miserable and truly pitiable state, driven by merciless wretches from their own quiet fire-sides, in a state of almost total destitution, into a foreign country, so much excited her commiseration, that she resolved to devote the entire profits of this tract to their relief, amounting on the whole to considerably more than £200, for which she had the honour to receive the thanks of the Committee chosen for the manangement of the fund raised for their relief.

In this spirited, well-written pamphlet, the absurdity, wickedness, and pernicious tendency of atheism are clearly depicted. Infidelity is not openly attacked, but is exhibited as the hideous parent of vices the most gigantic, utterly barren of all that is good, richly productive of unmitigated, universal evil. It is a concise, but noble defence of Christianity, well worthy, at any time, of an attentive perusal; but more especially serviceable at the time of its appearance, when it operated as a powerful, perhaps the most powerful check to that wild, reckless spirit of atheistic fredom, misnamed liberty, which threatened then to produce the same frightful havoc in England as it had already produced in France. Yet such was the humility, and such the mean opinion she formed of her productions, that she thus writes respecting it to the Earl of Orford :—" Dupont's atheistic speech has stuck in my throat all the winter, and I have been waiting for our bishops and our clergy to take some notice of them ; but blasphemy and atheism have been allowed to become familiar to the minds

of our common people, without scarcely any attempt being made to counteract the poison. The effort I have presumed to make, I need not tell your lordship, is a very weak one; but I will tell you on what occasion I have presumed to make it. I happened to know a good many of the religious people, both in the Church and among the different sects, whose fondness for French politics entirely blinds them to the horrors of French impiety. To such I have addressed my pamphlet. But I have another motive—to relieve the pressing distresses of the poor emigrant priests. I know how paltry is the little I can do; but my conscience tells me that that little ought to be done."

Though Miss More's pamphlet was written throughout in an amiable Christian spirit; yet was it severely attacked with much rancour and bitterness by three individuals: "The first accused me," she says, "of openly opposing God's vengeance against Popery, by wickedly wishing that the French priests should not be starved when it was God's will that they should: the second undertakes the defence of Dupont, and justifies his principles: the third declares, that I am a favourer of the old Popish massacres."

If Miss More had not distinctly stated the grounds on which she advocated the claims of the French priests to the sympathy of British Christians, some inconsiderate individuals might probably have concluded, from her known intimacy with some Catholics, that she was herself rather friendly than otherwise, to that most corrupt religion: but, in her opening address, imagining, perhaps, that she was liable to such a charge, she distinctly states: "Some have objected to the difference of religion of those for whom we solicit aid: such an objection hardly deserves a serious answer. Surely, if the superstitious Tartar hopes to become possessed of the courage and

talents of the enemy he slays, the Christian ought not to be afraid of catching or propagating the error of the sufferer he relieves. Christian charity is of no party. We plead not for their faith, but for their wants: but while we affirm, that it is not for their Popery, but for their poverty, for which we solicit aid, yet, let the more scrupulous, who look for desert as well as distress, in the objects of their bounty, bear in mind, that, if those men could have sacrificed their conscience to their convenience, they had not now been in this country; and if we wish for proselytes, who knows but this may be the first step towards their conversion, if we show them the purity of our religion by the beneficence of our actions?"

But if this had been deemed insufficient to remove all suspicions of her looking with a favourable eye upon the dangerous delusions of the Romish church, the following passage, in which, while stating all that could be said in defence of those who at first regarded the French revolution with approbation, she incidentally declares her real opinion of Popery. "Much, very much, is to be said, in vindication of those, who, in the first instance, favoured the recent political projects of the French: the cause they took in hand seemed to be the great cause of human kind: its very name insured popularity. What English heart did not exult at the demolition of the bastile? What lover of his species did not triumph in the warm hope, that one of the finest countries in the world would soon be the most free. Popery and despotism, though chained by the gentle influence of Louis the Sixteenth, had actually slain their thousands. Little was it then imagined, that anarchy and atheism, the monsters who were about to succeed them, would soon slay their ten thousands. Who, I say, that had a head to reason, or a heart to feel, did not glow

with the hope, that from the ruins of tyranny, and the rubbish of Popery, a beautiful and finely-framed edifice would, in time, have been constructed; and that ours would not have been the only country in which the patriot's fair idea of well-understood liberty, the politician's view of a perfect constitution, together with the establishment of a pure and reasonable, a sublime and rectified Christianity might be realized."

But the truth is, that some well-intentioned, but mistaken people, were so enamoured with the glowing professions of liberty made by the mad leaders of the French revolution, as to be utterly unwilling to have their eyes opened to its enormities; hence their sore dislike to Miss More's pamphlet. She condemned the atrocities of atheism and infidelity, and on that account they denounced her as the advocate of Papal cruelty and superstition. Her conduct towards them was characteristic of her mental greatness and Christian feeling. Instead of returning railing for railing, it was her chief concern to extract from their bitter remarks some spiritual benefit. "My mind is too much taken up with the modern massacres, to have leisure or disposition for one emotion of personal resentment. The enemies of God, of morality, of human nature, occupy one's thoughts, and one's conversation, almost too much; and while we exhaust upon them the indignation which their unparalleled crimes excite, we should never forget, that we partake with them of the same corrupt nature. "I can assure your lordship," she writes to Lord Orford, "that my three antagonists have not given me one moment's uneasiness. All censure, however, is profitable, for if one does not happen to deserve it for the thing in question, it makes one look into oneself; but my mind is of such a make, that my chief danger lies not in abuse, but in flattery. Yet, let me not try to pass for better than I am; these hostilities do not happen to be *my*

trials: it costs me little to forgive these angry men. My feelings are excited by other objects than pamphlets, paragraphs, reviews, or magazines, written against me by people I do not know, and whose good opinion makes no part of my happiness: but an unkind look, a severe word, or a cool letter from one of those very persons who make up my world, would very painfully convince me, that it is not a deadness, or insensibility to others, that keeps me so quiet under certain provocations—that my patience is only partial; and if the right, or rather the wrong string be touched, I have as much discord in me as any other."

The censure of some persons is far more to be prized than their praise. To be vilified and aspersed, by individuals who had the hardihood to advocate the odious system which Miss More had so successfully exposed, was an honour, rather than otherwise. Lord Orford might well say, writing to her, "Let the vile abuse vented against you be balm to your mind: your writings must have done great service when they have so much provoked the enemy. All, who have any religion or principle, must revere your name. Who would not be hated by Duponts and Dantons; and if abhorrence of atheism implies Popery, reckon it a compliment to be called Papist."

These efforts to benefit the public by her pen did not, in the smallest degree, diminish her activity in the villages: the attention she paid to the schools during the whole of the summer of 1793, was unremitting. She must, at this time, have been most indefatigable, though her health was very far from good; for being now fairly recognized as the advocate of religion and good government, in opposition to atheism and anarchy, and having the strongest assurances that her two pamphlets had been extensively useful, instead of replying to the scurrilous productions of her opponents, she thought it ad-

visable to follow up her attacks on infidelity, and, by means of a cheap 'Monthly Repository,' to diffuse useful and religious knowledge among the lower classes.

This project she carried into effect. The periodical was printed, under her sole superintendence, in Bath: its circulation was immense. It was with the greatest difficulty that the press could supply the demand for copies. The contributions of all her literary friends were earnestly requested, towards procuring for it suitable articles, but by far the greater part of it was the production of her own pen. 'The Tales of the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain;' 'The Two wealthy Farmers;' 'The Two Shoemakers;' 'Betty Brown, the Orange Girl;' 'Black Giles, the Poacher;' 'Mr. Fantom, the Infidel, and his Servants;' 'Hester Wilmot;' with all the Allegories, were hers.

Such was the extraordinary success of this work, that no less than two million copies were sold during the first year; and it was the general opinion, that it contributed more than any other single publication, if not more than all others jointly, to counteract the poison of those injurious and immoral pamphlets, which the deluded advocates of infidelity so industriously and extensively circulated. Thus had a female, and one, too, in very delicate health, the honour of defeating the most daring and open attack on religion that perhaps was ever made.

The miscellany, however, was not devoted solely to one object. Its author sought to enrich it with sound and wholesome information, on all subjects likely to be of importance to the lower classes. Industry and economy were constantly inculcated: and though her character as an eminent writer was established by this publication, yet this was, in no respect, her object. Her only aim was to benefit the poor; if she accomplished this she was

satisfied, whatever might be the result to herself. "I have endeavoured to show them," she remarks in one of her letters, "that their distresses arise nearly as much from their own bad management as from the badness of the times. The leading tract in the next month is on this subject—the piece is called, 'The Way of Plenty.' You, my dear madam, will smile to see your friend figuring away in the new character of a cook, furnishing receipts for cheap dishes. It is not, indeed, a very brilliant career, but I feel that the value of a thing lies so much more in its usefulness, than its splendour, that I have a notion I should derive more benefit from being able to lower the price of bread, than from having written the 'Iliad.' But let me not forget to do homage to real talents, for which I still retain something of my ancient kindness."

The following incident is illustrative of the power of her pen, and of her readiness to employ it in any way that was likely to be productive of good. The colliers in the neighbourhood of Bath, owing to some cause, were greatly excited and dissatisfied, and had formed a coalition to open revolt, from which, consequences the most serious were to be apprehended. She was informed of it by a benevolent gentleman, who much lamented it, but saw not by what means it could be prevented. It occurred to her, that a sprightly ballad, incidentally exposing the evils of revolt, would perhaps be more likely to meet the case than any production of a graver cast. She accordingly composed one for insertion in the next miscellany, entitled 'The Riot,' in which the evils of revolt were exhibited with such genuine touches of humour, that on a number of them being circulated among the colliers, the desired effect was produced. With her characteristic humility she thus adverts to the circumstance: "It has been no small support to me under the labours of the 'Cheap Re-

pository,' that it has met with the warm protection of so many excellent persons, and brought me to the acquaintance of the wise and the good, in very remote parts of the kingdom, who are anxiously catching at even the feeblest attempts to stem that headlong torrent of vice, and that spirit of licentiousness and insurrection, which is threatening to undo us. They would have me believe, but I ought not to tell you, it savours so much of arrogance and egotism, (and I should tell it hardly to any one else,) that a very formidable riot among the colliers, in the neighbourhood of Bath, was happily prevented by the ballad of 'The Riot.' Their plan was thoroughly settled: they were resolved to work no more, but to attack first the mills, and then the gentry. A gentleman of large fortune got into their confidence, and a few hundreds of the ballad were distributed and sung, with the effect, as they say, mentioned above. Is it not a fresh proof by what weak instruments evils are now and then prevented?"

During these labours, which could have left Miss More scarcely any leisure time, she kept up a very extensive correspondence. Though her health was far from good, her mind was happy. She evidently felt the power of that Christian principle, which when cordially received, divests the mind of all selfish feelings, constraining its possessor to pursue less what will promote his own gratification, than what would subserve the interests of others. There was in this, as in all other respects, an entire consistency in her conduct—she was the same in one place as in another. She avowed her attachment to piety, not obtrusively, but honestly, to her rich friends as well as to her poor villagers; expressing as much concern, in her intercourse with the former, whether by letter or by conversation, as for the latter. Nothing afforded her greater pleasure than to hear that any of her correspondents were actuated by a spirit of devoted piety.

CHAPTER X.

Continued active endeavours to do good—Religious experience—Persevering attention to her Repository Tracts—Vigilant self-inspection—Unremitting benevolent exertions—Sunday labours—Anxiety to avoid giving offence—Retires for relaxation to Bath—Again visits London—Increasing piety—Lord Orford's present of a Bible—Returns to Cowslip Green—Anxiety to relieve the temporal wants of the Poor—Judicious advice to a friend—Concern for her own spiritual welfare.

Miss Moore spent some weeks in London, the early part of 1794. During the whole of that year, we find her pursuing, with increasing activity, her career of useful exertions, scarcely allowing herself any interval of relaxation. Her piety had now become so decided, that she regarded all pursuits as of little importance, except such as contributed to promote its maturity in herself, or its cultivation in others. Time unnecessarily devoted to other objects she considered as lost; and a deep sense of her accountability to employ it aright pervaded her mind. When she was unavoidably so situated, that she had to pass an hour in a way not likely to promote either her own improvement or that of others, it occasioned her much regret.

She appears to have been at this time in a slight degree the subject of nervous depression, produced probably by her close and unremitting literary and village exertions. In a letter to Mr. Wilberforce, with whom

she kept up a regular correspondence, and who had kindly sympathized with her, and offered her some judicious advice, she gives the following interesting description of her feelings: "You have hit on my disease, and I am persuaded have pointed out the only remedy. I know, too, that your authority will give weight to your suggestions, as my mind is much more liable to be acted upon by the hints and counsels of an able discerning friend, than from books or even from meditation. I thank God, I feel somewhat less of the distress I mentioned before, but it is, I fear, because my animal spirits are less depressed, and not because my heart is more right. I trust my faith is sound, but it is not lively: I have not a full and vigourous confidence in those promises, which I, however, fully believe; and I am sure there must be something amiss in my heart which I do not know of, though I know so much of its defects, because I have little sensible joy: I do not at all lean on my own wretched performances, yet I feel a coldness in doing, and a servile anxiety in omitting them. My very desire for that perfection after which I trust I am labouring, proceeds too much from impatience and self-love. My right actions have but poor motives. I want the satisfactions and complacencies of a perfect state, before I have got rid of the corruptions of a depraved nature."

That the inference Miss More drew, respecting the deficiency which she imagined there was in her piety, owing to its not producing that degree of joy she desired, was correct, we think is very doubtful. We admit that Christianity, correctly viewed and cordially embraced, is intended to, and usually does produce joy and peace; it had this effect on the early converts to Christianity, and it will always have the same effect when received with the same simplicity and earnestness, unless prevented by some physically obstructing cause. It is as much

the Christian's duty to rejoice in the Lord, as it is to obey any precept. But there may be cases when the mind is so harassed by incessant exertions, as to become incapable of taking pleasure in any thing. Such seems to have been the case with Miss More at this time: her benevolent exertions had, for a season, incapacitated her for deriving that pleasure from religion, which she would otherwise have experienced. But that there was any latent indulged evil in her heart could not hence be inferred.

Where there is a sincere and earnest desire for the increase of piety, and where the appointed means to secure it are regularly resorted to, it can never be justly inferred, be the feelings of the individual what they may, that any essential constituent of genuine piety is wanting. But such is the humiliating view which the truly pious have of themselves, when they look at the natural impurity of their hearts, that the most consistent characters may occasionally be the subjects of apprehension. Where, however, it induces, as it does in the humble Christian, and as it did in Miss More, increased activity in the service of God, and more diligent self-inspection, it is a symptom of growing, rather than of declining piety.

Miss More's time was so completely taken up this year, in composing suitable pieces for the 'Repository,' and in pursuing her village exertions, that her correspondence was very limited; from her private journal, however, it will be seen that her mind was becoming more deeply and decidedly serious. Under the date of June 19th, she piously and gratefully writes, "Heard of the death of Gibbon, the calumniator of the despised Nazarene, the derider of Christianity. Awful dispensation! With him I was formerly on terms of intimacy. Lord, I bless thee, considering now much infidel acquaintance I have had, that my soul never came into their secret!

How many souls have his writings polluted! Lord preserve others from their contagion."

The ensuing month we find her lamenting that dissipation of mind of which the greatest philanthropists have often complained, even when pursuing most actively their benevolent career. "This has been a hurrying week to me, in trying to raise money for the militia shoes. So much writing and talking, that there has been little leisure for reading, little disposition for communion with God. When shall I gain more self-possession? When shall I be able to do the business of the world, without catching its spirit?" Having complied with an invitation to dine with a party of friends, during a short visit to London, we find her expressing apprehensions to the same effect. "March 12. Dined with some friends of Mrs. ——. Was constrained to say, What dost thou here? Felt too much pleased at the pleasure expressed by so many accomplished friends on seeing me again. Keep me from contagion!"

Returning from London to her favourite rural retreat, she records the movement of her mind in language indicative of piety the most sincere and ardent. "When I look back on the past week, I see cause for mourning over my vanity and folly. Escaped from hurry, vexation, gaiety, and temptation, to peace, leisure, and retirement, where I had planned much progress to my own mind, I find a languor, a drowsiness, and deadness, sloth, and self-love getting strong dominion, and much time wasted, which I had devoted to improvement. Let these continual discoveries make me humble. All has been peace and quiet without, and that has induced carelessness within. The calm of prosperity is not good for the soul."

While paying a short visit to Bishop Porteus, she complains, as too many have had reason to do, of the unfriendly influence exerted on the growth of

piety, by the habits of polished life. "Came to Fulham, to my dear bishop: much kindness, literary and elegant society; but the habits of polished life, even of such as are pious, are too relaxing. Much serious reading, but not a serious spirit; good health, with increased relaxation of mind: thus are the blessings of God turned against himself."

The elevated tone of her piety, and the rigid impartiality with which she scrutinized her heart on resuming her village exertions, will be seen from the following remarks: "Prayed with some comfort, but my mind was too much on other concerns. Have much business on my hands at this time, and though it is all of a charitable, religious nature (for I humbly design never to have any other,) yet still the details of it drive away my thoughts from God. When shall I be purified? This week I have not made the best of my time: vain thoughts and old besetting sins begin to resume their power. Lord, enable me to pray more, to struggle more, to live in closer communion with thee. Spoke boldly to Miss B——: made her promise to read the New Testament, and some work on the evidences of Christianity. Follow, Lord, with thy blessing, her resolutions, and show her the truth. —Another month has now ended; before it closed I heard of the death of ten old friends, *all* taken—I left. Will nothing quicken my diligence? Have recently been confined four days with the headache; an unprofitable season—thoughts wandering—little communion with God. I see, by every fresh trial, that the time of sickness is seldom the season for religious improvement. This great work should be done in health, or it will seldom be well done. O! for a better preparation for sickness and death!"

Miss More generally spent the Sundays in the villages, diligently employed in teaching the young the knowledge of that religion which she had found so highly beneficial. The satisfaction she enjoyed in

the pursuit of these objects, though it was often most fatiguing, far exceeded the pleasure she could have derived from other pursuits. "Went to Shipham," she remarks,—July 13: "very full schools at each: had much comfort in the improvement of most, and the growing piety of many. Both my sister and myself were enabled to speak and instruct with spirit, and our remarks seemed to make an impression. Read a sermon—came home very late, but I hope full of gratitude. September 14.—We had a very blessed day at Cheddar. Between three and four hundred, young and old, were present, and many were seriously impressed. This has revived my hopes that God will enable us to carry on this very extensive work. May we be deeply humbled under a sense of our own unworthiness for the work. May the glory of God and the good of souls be our only end."

Though Miss More's health was delicate, yet she seldom permitted the weather to keep her from her delightful employment in the villages on the Sunday. On some occasions, however, when it was unusually wet and cold, she was compelled to remain at home. These were always seasons of more than usual seriousness, employed in the most fervent devotion and the most diligent self-inspection. Being thus detained on Sunday, Oct. 19, she piously and gratefully remarks, "I have seldom a Sabbath to spend to myself. Let me not trifle away the precious opportunity, but pass it in extraordinary prayer, reading and meditation. I desire to remember with particular gratitude in my devotions, that on this day five years my colleague and myself opened our first religious institution at Cheddar. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for the seed that was that day sown, and for the great progress of Christianity in that region of darkness. I desire, O Lord, to bless thy holy name for so many means of doing good, and that when I visit the poor, I am enabled to mitigate some of their miseries. I

bless thee that thou hast called me to this employment, which, in addition to many other advantages, contributes to keep my heart tender. I thank thee, that by thus being enabled to assist the outward wants of the body, I have the better means of making myself heard and attended to in speaking to them of their spiritual wants. Let me never separate temporal from spiritual charity, but act in humble imitation of my blessed Lord and his apostles."

Miss More acted like a true Christian philanthropist, making it her principal object to seek the moral and spiritual benefit of the poor, but by no means overlooking their temporal interests. Individuals who do the one and leave the other undone, can hardly be said to come up to the scriptural standard of benevolence. To give the poor instruction, and to withhold from them relief, if we have it in our power to afford it, is most inconsistent. It is like undoing with one hand what we do with the other. It is when the objects of our benevolence discover in us a kind solicitude for their temporal welfare that they will be most inclined to listen to our instruction, and those who partake of our bounty will set a higher value upon it in proportion as they discover on the part of their benefactors, a concern to promote their spiritual welfare. Charity, to be truly Christian, must embrace these two objects. Charity is a duty of universal obligation at all times. It was important in Miss More's day, but it is more especially so in our own. The recent alteration in the legal provision made for the relief of the poor, must for a time, at least, however beneficial it may afterwards prove, press heavily upon many who cannot help themselves. This evil can only be met and adequately relieved by the active benevolence of British Christians, who, in the conduct of Miss More, have an example set them worthy of their closest imitation, and who it is hoped will never forget the poor of the

land. But it is not in the giving of alms alone that Christian charity consists. This must be done to the aged and the sick, and in some cases even to the strong. To this, however, must be added, what is, perhaps of greater importance, because more generally applicable—the adoption of some plan to elicit the exertions of the poor on their own behalf, and to give every encouragement to economy and industry.

In Miss More's village exertions she acted with firmness, tempered invariably with great caution. Making allowances for the mortification of, at least, implied censure, which she knew her exertions cast on clerical supineness, she carefully endeavoured to avoid giving offence to the vicar or curate of the parishes in which her schools were established. In the majority of cases she succeeded, and her exertions were not only tolerated, but a lively interest was taken in their success. In a few instances she was violently opposed, misrepresented, maligned, and stigmatised as a methodistic innovator, who was secretly condemning the Church. These she found it impossible to conciliate. This opposition had a painful but not an irritating effect on her mind. Returning from a village where she had been thus opposed, she remarks, in a calm, Christian spirit: "This has been a painful, trying day. Much enmity against religious schemes—opposition, labour, and bodily fatigue. Yet what is this to what the apostles and their blessed Master endured? Lord, enable me to have patience with these ignorant opposers of thy Son. I feel encouraged by seeing many of our young men seriously affected, and am unwilling, on that account, to break up even this one school, which I think we should have done had our motives been merely human. Lord, increase our faith; let the discoveries of faith be more clear, the desires of faith more strong, the dependencies of faith more fixed,

the dedications of faith more ardent, and the delights of faith more elevating and durable."

At the close of her summer's arduous and persevering labours, such had been her anxiety to guard against becoming insensible to her own spiritual welfare, while she was seeking to promote that of others, that neither the fatigue she had endured, nor the opposition she had encountered, though the former had been most harassing, and the latter most vexatious, had in any degree impaired the vigour of her piety; it had become more decided and ardent. "When will my heart," she writes, "be a fit tabernacle for the spirit of purity. I have lately had much communion with God in the night; and have been, I hope, more disposed to convert silence and solitude into seasons of prayer. I think, also, I fear death less. I am much tried by the temper of others. Lord, subdue my own evil tempers, let me constantly think of him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself." Her mind had now become so decidedly serious, that she eagerly embraced every means that was likely to promote the growth of piety, cheerfully denying herself even of those indulgences which from the habits of her mind must have required great sacrifice of feeling. "I endeavour at this time," she writes, "to convert my retirements to holy purposes. I find much pleasure and profit in the course of Henry's exposition of St. Luke. It is now, I think, five or six years since I have been enabled, by the grace of God, in a good degree to give up all human studies. I have not allowed myself to read any classic or pagan author for many years—I mean by myself. Yet these are but small sacrifices I am required to make. Give me grace, O God, for greater, if thou callest me to them! I desire to ascribe it to thy grace, that I have long since had much pleasure in serious books. I now willingly read little of which religion is not the

subject. I do not glory in this, but am humbled by reflecting that constant use of the means has not made me more devout, and that my thoughts at other times are not more holy."

As the winter approached she was compelled to repair to Bath, to avoid too frequent exposure to cold, and to obtain some relaxation from her village labours. The same devotional spirit accompanied her thither. What she was among the uncultivated villagers, that she was in polished society. "December 15th," she says, "I have now entered on a new scene of life. O Lord, fit me for its duties, and keep me from its temptations. I thank thee that the vain, unprofitable company with which this place abounds is a burden to me: give me a holy discretion on the one hand, and zeal not to be drawn off from better practices on the other. As my conversation will be less useful, so let me be careful that my thoughts are more holy, and that I look more after the state of my heart." Alluding to the sarcastic sneers of some with whom she was formerly intimate, she adds, "Give me a submissive spirit to bear all the wounding words I may be obliged to hear against religion. And do thou remove those prejudices which obstruct the growth of some of my friends in Divine things."

At Bath she suffered not her time to pass unemployed, but applied closely to the composition of articles for her 'Repository,' the sale of which rapidly increased. Many distinguished individuals took an active part in its circulation. Among the most zealous was the Bishop of London; who in a recent charge to his diocese had commended the plan of thus counteracting the spread of infidelity as admirable, and strongly recommended it to general imitation. In a letter to her, in reply to one she had sent him, soliciting his aid as a contributor, he playfully remarks: "Your plan, my dear Miss More, seems admirably calculated to do very substantial

and extreme good. I have no doubt but you will meet with many supporters and coadjutors. I am perfectly well aware, not only of the real existence, but of the magnitude and extent of the evil you mean to combat. As to materials, you will be at no loss: you will, yourself, spin a thousand in a day: then consider what a tribe of auxiliaries you will have, in the numerous and illustrious race of the *Chips;* and if more should be wanted, we must try to raise recruits in the populous and learned villages of Chelsea and Fulham. But we wish to know, first, how many authors you mean to take into your pay; what wages you will allow; and whether you will afford them a decent garret, clean linen three times a-week, and a hot dinner on Sundays: at all events, we hope you treat them better than the booksellers did Milton and Johnson."

One of the contributors, whose aid Miss More solicited, was Mr. Newton. In her letter to him on the subject, she describes, most judiciously, the kind of compositions which she thought would be the most suitable: her object was to make them the vehicle for the conveyance of sound Christian principles; and to do this in a way the least likely to give offence to those who unhappily opposed them. To accomplish this was no easy matter. "I thought," she says, "I had counted the cost before I began; but I find the labour very great, and here lies one of my difficulties. The religious poor, whether in the church or out of it, little need this sort of help: it is the profligate multitude that want to be drawn off from that pernicious trash, the corruption of which is incalculable; I have therefore thought it lawful to write a few moral stories, the main circumstances of which have occurred within my own knowledge, but so altered as to suit my plan, carefully observing to found all goodness on religious principles. Some strict people will perhaps think, that all invention should have been excluded, but,

alas! I know with whom I have to deal; and I hope I may thus allure these thoughtless creatures on to higher things: add to this, my great and worldly friends are terribly afraid I shall be too methodistical, (a term now reproachfully applied to all vital Christianity,) and will watch me so narrowly, that it will require more prudence than some of my religious friends would think it right to employ."

That the price of the 'Repository' might not impede its circulation, but be lower than the trash it was meant to oppose, she made the charge so small, that she must have been a loser to the amount of several hundred pounds, had not subscriptions been made to meet the loss: but of so much importance was the publication deemed, that committees were formed in London, and some other places, to devise means to promote its distribution, and to make up for the loss incurred by its publication.

Early in 1795, Miss More visited her friends in London: she was now, more than ever, determined, plainly and candidly to avow her attachment to religion, on all suitable occasions, and strongly to recommend it to others. We find her, accordingly, in one of her first visits, earnestly commending it to the serious attention of an illustrious individual. Writing to her sister, she says, "I paid my visit to Gloucester House, yesterday: Lady Waldegrave presented me to the Duchess: we had two hours of solid, rational, religious conversation. It would be too little, to say that the Duchess's behaviour is gracious in the extreme: she behaved to me with the affectionate familiarity of an equal; and though I took the opportunity of saying stronger things, of a religious kind, than perhaps she had ever heard, she bore it better than any great person I ever conversed with, and seemed not offended at the strictness of the gospel. I was resolved to preserve the simplicity of my own character, and conversed with the greatest ease."

But she did not always, nor indeed often, meet with individuals equally ready to receive her instruction; for, though she invariably endeavoured to convey it in a manner the most pleasing, and none could do this better than herself, yet it was often ill-received, even by those whom she very highly respected. "Lord Orford," she writes, "rallied me, yesterday, for what he called the ill-natured strictness of my tracts; and talked, foolishly enough, of the cruelty of making the poor spend so much time in reading books. I recommended him, and the ladies present, to read 'Law's Serious Call:' I told them, it was a book that their favourite Gibbon had highly praised; and moreover, that Law had been Gibbon's tutor in early life.—Was there ever such a contrast between preceptor and pupil?"

Whether his lordship condescended to read the volume, she had recommended, or not, we cannot say: it appears not unlikely; for she was informed, that, during an attack of illness a short time afterwards, he regretted much having reproached her for her piety, and expressed an earnest hope that she would forgive him, which she instantly sent him word she did most readily, and would not forget him in her prayers. On his lordship's recovery, he presented her with a copy of Bishop Wilson's Bible, elegantly bound, upon which he had put the following inscription:—

TO HIS EXCELLENT FRIEND,
MISS HANNAH MORE,
THIS BOOK,
WHICH HE KNOWS TO BE THE DEAREST OBJECT OF HER STUDY,
AND BY WHICH,
TO THE GREAT COMFORT AND RELIEF
OF NUMBERLESS AFFLICTED AND DISTRESSED INDIVIDUALS,
SHE HAS PROFITED,
BEYOND ANY PERSON WITH WHOM HE WAS ACQUAINTED,
IS OFFERED AS A MARK OF HIS ESTEEM AND GRATITUDE,
BY HER SINCERE AND OBLIGED, HUMBLE SERVANT,
HORACE, EARL OF ORFORD.
1795.

To have received such a present, with such an inscription, from such an individual, must have been to Miss More highly gratifying. A mind not habitually and decidedly pious, it might have made vain; with her it had an opposite effect: "O," said she, "that his lordship would study that blessed book, to which he attributes my having done far more good than is true. Alas! when I receive these undue compliments, I am ready to answer, with my old friend Johnson, 'Sir, I am a miserable sinner.'"

The greater part of the summer and autumn of 1795, Miss More spent with her sister at Cowslip Green, in the diligent pursuit of her village labours; which now pressed more heavily upon them, in consequence of the death of the excellent, most pious, and useful schoolmistress, who had superintended one of their largest establishments from its commencement, not only to the satisfaction, but to the admiration of all parties. Their labour was increased, too, by having undertaken, at the earnest request of the resident clergyman and magistrate, to instruct another large parish. In a letter to Mr. Wilberforce, October 1795, she thus adverts to the circumstance, and at the same time, replies to a suggestion he had kindly given, that they should engage an assistant. "I take, very kindly, your friendly sympathy and attention in proposing to look out for an assistant to us in our operations, but I write on purpose to beg you will not think of it. At present, we rub on pretty well; it will be time enough to think of your scheme when I am quite laid by. This hot weather makes me suffer terribly; yet I have now and then a good day, and on Sunday was enabled to open the new school. It was an affecting sight: several of the grown-up youths had been tried at the last assizes; three were the children of a person lately condemned: many thieves, all ignorant, profane, vicious, beyond be-

lief. Of this banditti we have admitted near two hundred; and when the clergyman saw these creatures kneeling round us, whom he had seldom seen but in the discharge of his magisterial duties, to commit, or punish, he burst into tears. I can do them but little good, I fear, but the grace of God can do all."

As the winter approached, it threatened to press heavily upon many of the poor in their villages: hence they were most anxious to provide for their relief. At this juncture, a most welcome letter arrived from Mr. Wilberforce, enquiring whether they would take the trouble to distribute among the most needy and deserving, a small sum, supplied by his own bounty and that of the late benevolent H. Thornton, Esq. Nothing could have been more providential or more welcome. "I joyfully accept," writes Miss More, "the honourable office of your almoner, on condition that you will find fault with, and direct me, with as little scruple as I shall have in disposing of your money. Patty is very proud of being admitted into the confederacy, and being appointed superintendent of Cheddar, a title, however, she will only hold by delegation in my too long absences: for I like my dignity too well, to allow her to be more than vice-queen. What a comfort I feel in looking round on these starving and half-naked multitudes, to think, that by your liberality, many of them may be fed and clothed; and, O! if but one soul is rescued from eternal misery, how may we rejoice over it in another state, where, perhaps, it may make no small part of our felicity, that our friendship was turned to some useful account, in advancing the good of others, and as I humbly presume to hope, in preparing ourselves for that life which shall have no end."

Instructed by her writings, and stimulated by her example, some of her friends had become decidedly

pious: these were accustomed to consult her for advice in all cases of difficulty. In reply to an amiable friend, distinguished for his gaiety of temper, who had consulted her as to how far he might indulge it, and not incur the charge of inconsistency, she judiciously remarks; "Christianity requires us to convert every natural talent to a religious use, and hence I think you are serving God, by making yourself agreeable upon your own views and principles, (for the motive is the act,) to worldly, but not ill-disposed people, who would never be attracted to religion by grave divines, even if such fell in their way. Those who are able, by cheerful manners, to adorn the doctrine of God, their Saviour, defeat the end of the Giver of such an endowment, by assuming an opposite character. Your cheerful carriage will often become an honest bait, by which those who would otherwise dislike you, because of your piety, may be inclined to think favourably of you: I do not mean, that their liking you signifies any thing, except in so far as through your medium they may be brought to relish religion. Many have been induced to read 'Cowper's Task' by 'John Gilpin;' 'Pascal's Thoughts,' by his 'Provincial Letters;' and Doddridge's works, by his letters. One great use that may follow your carrying this cheerfulness into worldly company, is, that if they have sense and reflection, they will discover what sacrifices you must make, and what conquests religion enables you to achieve over yourself, when they find that gaiety does not seduce you from the rigour of your principles: they will see that you are not driven to religion, because you have no taste for wit and elegance; and that your nonconformity to the world, does not spring from your having no taste for its enjoyments, but because you know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Buried, as they are, in luxury and indulgence, it is only by such discoveries that they can ever get the

smallest glimpse of the meaning of the Christian injunctions, 'to pluck out the right eye, and to cut off the right hand.' To such people, religion must be made, as it were, tangible, visible, palatable, else they are apt to take it as idle speculation."

The truth of these remarks cannot be questioned. The cause of piety is never advanced by investing it in colours severe and repulsive; in such a case, it loses its native loveliness and beauty, and the fine proportion of its figure is destroyed. In the Redeemer's deportment there was nothing like it; his conduct was a happy mixture of cheerfulness without levity. St. Paul tells us that he endeavoured to become *all* things to all men, that he might save *some*. The prospect of being useful will justify us in conformity to the world, in all matters not essentially important; but there is always some danger, lest, in thus approaching the irreligious, we should catch their spirit instead of imparting our own. It will generally be unsafe for those whose tempers are naturally cheerful and gay, unless they are experienced and well established, to indulge them too freely, especially in the presence of the irreligious, lest, ininstead of promoting, they should injure the cause of piety.

In 1796 we find Miss More still busily employed in providing suitable articles for the 'Repository.' The country was then inundated with seditious and sceptical publications. Every possible encouragement was given to hawkers, to circulate them among the poor; and though the 'Repository' was selling much below what it cost, yet it was considerably dearer than the trash it was intended to expose. Finding this to be the case, Miss More determined to print two editions of the publication, one on a superior paper for the higher classes, and the other in the cheapest form possible. The zeal with which she entered on this work is thus stated:

"I am more anxious than ever to bring out an edition of the 'Repository,' so excessively cheap as to meet the hawkers on their own ground, having lately had sent down to me halfpenny papers printed at the seditious shops, full of the most horrid blasphemy and profaneness. Vulgar and indecent penny books were always common, but speculative infidelity, brought down to the capacities of the poor, forms a new era in our country. This requires a strong counteraction: I do not pretend that ours is very strong, but we must do what we can."

Miss More had studiously and anxiously endeavoured, in her periodical publications, to avoid the introduction of subjects merely political. But politics were so mixed up with the poisonous productions she was opposing, that it was impossible effectually to expose their absurdity without occasionally adverting to subjects of this nature. She had, however, prudently avoided taking the side of any party, contenting herself with the exposure of such errors as she thought subversive of good order. Yet she did not escape censure; by the violent on both sides, she was accused of circulating directly opposite sentiments. These accusations she bore with a Christian spirit. "Your accounts," she writes, "of your democratic visits at Portsmouth and in its vicinity, amused me not a little. I can truly and thankfully say, that I hear with little emotion such attacks on the supposed violence of my aristocratic principles. You know how much more I have had to bear from my supposed attachment to democrats and dissenters. My episcopal and other great friends suspect me of leaning too strongly to that side, while I am supported by the consciousness of the moderation of my principles, both in what relates to politics and religion. I have received a most flaming letter from America, abusing me on the same ground. May you and I, my dear sir, be tempted

neither by abuse nor flattery to depart from that candour, and that tolerating spirit, which make so necessary a part of the Christian character, and which, I trust, will stand us in stead, when all petty names of party shall be done away, and when charity shall be all in all. O that it could be so here!"

To be misrepresented and calumniated, and to have our motives suspected, while pursuing a course of benevolence, is most discouraging. Under such treatment, many well-meaning individuals, conscious of the purity of their motives, have discontinued their benevolent exertions, disgusted with the want of principle and ingratitude of their opponents. But whatever excuse may be made for such conduct, it can hardly escape the charge of pusillanimity. Miss More knew that thus to act, would be to submit to a defeat, and to give her opponents cause of triumph. She wisely determined to proceed forward; and the successful result shows with what facility a great object may be accomplished, even amidst many formidable obstructions, by diligent perseverence. Adverting to this subject, in reply to an interesting letter from Mr. Newton, in which he had kindly stated that he remembered her in his prayers, she piously writes:—"You cannot imagine, my dear sir, how much comfort I derive from being assured that I and mine are frequently remembered by you at the throne of grace. I cannot express to you how much I stand in need of every support. Weak health, weak spirits, and weak faith, sometimes seem to concur in saying, 'Ye take too much upon you;' and yet I am carried through difficulties that appear insuperable, in a way that often fills me with wonder and gratitude. God is sometimes pleased to work by the most unpromising and unworthy instruments; I suppose to take away every shadow of doubt that it is his own doing. It always gives me

the idea (if not too low and familiar) of a great author writing with a very bad pen. You will be glad to hear that our work rather increases; our various schools and societies consist now of about seventeen hundred. To these we could attend with comparatively little fatigue, if they lay near each other; but our ten parishes are at considerable distances, so that poor Patty and I have a diameter of more than twenty miles to travel to get at them all. I do not flatter myself that we do much good; but the folly, the prejudice, the ignorance, the opposition, and the various disappointments we sometimes meet with, serve at least to teach us a spirit of forbearance; I sometimes however tremble to think, that while busy in looking after the vineyards of others, 'my own is not kept.' Pray for me, my dear sir, that I may have a more lively faith, a deeper humility, a spirit of more complete self-renunciation, that I may be more dead to the world, and more alive unto God."

CHAPTER XI.

Visits London—Death of Lord Orford—Intercourse with the Duchess of Gloucester—Return to Cowslip Green—Attention to her schools—Views of Christian attainment—Retires to Bath—Deep seriousness of mind—Careful self-inspection—Continued active exertions—Indisposition—Ardent piety—Finishes her Repository—Extension of her village labours—Fatigue and need of relaxation—Publishes her 'Strictures on Education'—Its merits—Extensive circulation.

Early in December 1796, after the toils of the summer and autumn, Miss More, instead of seeking some relaxation at Bath, paid a short visit to her friends in London, many of whom, especially Mrs. Garrick, complained much of being slighted. There was evidently on Miss More's part, much as she might seem to have exposed herself to this charge, a strong disposition, induced probably by a hope that she might drop some hints for their benefit, to retain the regard of those with whom she had formerly been on terms of close intimacy; so far at least as she could do it without the sacrifice of principle, or the loss of too much time, upon which she set too high a value to idle it away in useless visits. She only remained in London two or three weeks, whence she proceeded to spend some days at Fulham palace, with the family of Bishop Porteus, and thence passed on, early in 1797, to Bath.

During her stay in London, she spent some hours delightfully with the late Duchess of Gloucester,

whom she was happy to find making many anxious enquiries on the subject of religion. She most readily gave her royal highness all the assistance in her power, and shortly after her return took the liberty to send her a copy of Wilberforce's 'Essay on Practical Christianity,' enclosing with it a letter, in which she writes, "I feel too sensibly the privilege of being permitted to have some occasional intercourse with your royal highness, not to avail myself sometimes of the permission. You appear to me to enter so sincerely into those important points which involve the highest interests of mankind, and to be so earnest in your investigation of religious truths, that I venture to put into your hands the essay which accompanies this letter. You will find the principles it inculcates strict, but I think the strictness is not carried further than the gospel rule enjoins. It appears to me to be highly important, especially for young persons of high rank, to be enabled properly to estimate the standard of moral truth which Christianity has established, and clearly to distinguish it from that inferior, but more accommodating and therefore more acceptable standard, which the world holds out to its votaries. In short, I think it an object of no small importance to get such a sound and fixed principle as shall remove that self-delusion which the world and all its pleasing blandishments are so calculated to excite in young and amiable hearts. Much as one may, for a time, be seduced by the manners and practices of gay society, it seems to me of the last importance to preserve the *principle* pure, and to keep the *standard* high; I would therefore be particularly sedulous in inspiring young persons with a right view and a sound judgment on religious points, even though I were sure they would be drawn into perpetual error by mixing with the world; because I never think any faults irreclaimable or any dangers hopeless, while there is no perversion of principle.

But when they cease to see things as they really are, to confound distinctions, to pervert principles, to call good evil and evil good, then I always feel that the corruption has spread very far, not only seducing the passions, but darkening the intellect."

In the spring of 1797, Miss More again spent a few weeks with her friends in London. While there she was apprized of the death of Lord Orford, for whom she still felt a very high regard; notwithstanding the strong dislike to her piety his lordship had repeatedly expressed. Writing to her sister she refers to the event in language illustrative of her deep concern for his lordship's spiritual welfare: "Poor Lord Orford! I could not help mourning for him. Twenty years unclouded kindness and pleasant correspondence cannot be given up without emotion. I am not sorry now, that I never flinched from any of his ridicule, or attacks, or suffered them to pass without rebuke. At our last meeting I made him promise to buy 'Law's Serious Call.' His playful wit, his various knowledge, his polished manners, alas! what avail they now! The most serious thoughts are awakened. 'O that he had known and believed the things which belonged to his peace.' My heart is much oppressed with the reflection."

Among her friends in London, there were none whom she so gladly revisited as the Duchess of Gloster. It afforded her pleasure to find that the desire of her royal highness for religious knowledge was evidently increasing, and to perceive that the conversation she had previously had with her had not been forgotten. "By far the most interesting evening," she writes, "that I have passed in town, was at Gloucester House, where I have been twice. It would make some folks smile to know that we read the epistle to the Ephesians, commenting upon it as we proceeded." Mr. Wilberforce's chapter on "Hu-

man Corruption" led to a long discussion on that doctrine, and on other great points. It is a sure criterion of Christian piety, that it selects invariably, as its favourite subjects for discussion, the fundamental points of the Christian system.

Before returning to Cowslip Green, she again spent a few days with Bishop Porteus at Fulham. While there, she had the honour to be present at the celebration of a royal marriage at St. James's. Shortly afterwards she proceeded to the scene of her village labours. Scarcely had she arrived, when she had the pleasure to entertain for a few days, Mr. Wilberforce and his newly-married bride, who had pledged himself some years before, that in case he ever married, to favour her with his first visit.

The summer and autumn of 1797 were devoted, so far as her health would permit, to the improvement of her village schools, and so completely did they absorb her attention, that she wrote scarcely any letters. In her reply, however, to some interesting enquiries sent her by the Duchess of Gloucester, we find that in the autumn she had been seriously indisposed. "I should not," she says, "have been so tardy in expressing my acknowledgments for the very kind letter which I had the honour to receive from your royal highness, but that it found me on a sick-bed, to which I have lately been pretty much confined. But as I am persuaded that sickness comes from the same wise and merciful hand, which also dispenses of health, I wish to be enabled to receive both with an equal temper of mind; convinced that what is bestowed on me is precisely that which is best. I should not have presumed to set out with talking of my insignificant self, in preference to the very interesting subjects of your royal highness's letter, did I not feel it my duty to account for my seeming inattention."

The subject principally referred to in this letter,

related to the nature of evangelical piety, which Miss More had, on several occasions, taken the liberty to discuss with her royal highness, who appears to have imbibed the current but unscriptural notion, that mere external religion is the main constituent of Christian piety. The Duchess had recently been reading Archbishop Secker's Sermons, which she had highly commended, because his remarks were not severe upon those who were only pious in the estimation of the world. In reply, Miss More thus expresses her views on the subject: "I have great reverence for Archbishop Secker's talents and virtues, and he appears to me to have possessed one faculty of high and singular importance, for a writer on religion and morals, I mean an acute intuitive knowledge of the human heart. I think one grand defect in many of our preachers, and one reason, though not the primary one, why they do so little good, is that they do not attentively and accurately study human nature. One distinguishing attribute of the Divine Teacher was, as the apostle remarks, that 'he knew what was in man.' I cannot dismiss this subject without taking the liberty your royal highness is so gracious as to allow me, of expatiating a little on your remark, that 'his sermons will do more good, because he bears not too hard on the common run of good sort of people.' I presume your royal highness does not mean, that they will do *more good* because of that. That it will cause them to be *more read* I readily grant; but that it will cause them to do *more good* I take the liberty to question. I have had the honour and the impertinence, more than once, to hold some very lively and agreeable debates with your royal highness on the same *standard of right*, and on the difference, (great and essential in the view of Scripture,) between good sort of people, and good people. You have always conceded to me, that there is no real goodness,

where there is no religion, and that there is no true religion but that which the Gospel exhibits. I do not mean that any human being, with all those frailties and infirmities which still impede the best, can act up to the perfect pattern there exhibited. Even the best of the apostles and martyrs fell short of it. But I must contend, that every real Christian will endeavour to act on the *principle* and in the spirit of Christianity. He must labour after genuine piety and goodness, not for the praise of men, but for the glory of God. He must keep before his eyes, and ever seek after a degree of perfection which, however, he knows he shall never be able to attain. A continual sense of his many failings will serve to maintain him in humility—the basis of all true religion. If I did not think it was pushing the subject too far for a letter, I would go on to remark, that many persons in the New Testament, of whose future state we cannot entertain a very sanguine opinion, appear in a worldly sense to have been rather good sort of people: the man at whose gate the beggar Lazarus lay, may be supposed to have been charitable as well as splendid. He who said, Soul, take thine ease, and pulled down his barns to build greater, is not said to have acquired his wealth unjustly; and the Pharisee, who thanked God that he was not as other men, would probably have been reckoned in the number of amiable, good sort of people in St. James's-square; and some of the most respectable in the fashionable world, have been very glad to have gone to his dinners or parties. The young ruler was a very good sort of man, but he seemed to have loved the world better than his Saviour, and we are left to indulge no very assured hope of his eternal happiness."

Miss More's remarks on Christian perfection in the foregoing extract, seem liable to exception. To contend that we ought to seek an object which we

know to be unattainable, is, to say the least of it, not in accordance with the exhortations given us by the sacred writers. Whatever they enjoin as a duty, they invariably represent as within our reach, with the ever present aid we are to look for from above; without which indeed nothing is attainable. Perfection is clearly a Christian duty, but the term is evidently used in a relative, not in an absolute sense. The perfection we are to seek after, and which we may obtain, is human, and Christian, not angelic.

The delicate state of Miss More's health compelled her, as the winter approached, again to retire from her village labours to Bath, though she by no means enjoyed this fashionable resort. "Bath—gay, happy, inconsiderate Bath!" she says, "bears no signs of the distresses of the times. We go about all the morning lamenting the impending calamities, deploring the assessed taxes, and pleading poverty, and at night every place of diversion is overflowing with a fulness unknown in former seasons. I cannot help wishing that, while the suspended rod is mercifully withheld, we might seriously lay to heart, the admonition held out to us by other countries. Thank God, that among all our alarms, we have still the forty-sixth Psalm, Luther's favourite, on our side; and that amidst the too visible decay of piety, we do not yet formally worship reason or deify liberty.

Early in 1798 Miss More revisited her friends in London, but she spent the chief of her time with such of them as she knew were pious.

The depth of her piety will be seen by the following renewal of her dedication to God, which she made on the first day of this year. "Having obtained help of God, I continue to this day. Let me now dedicate myself to Him with a more entire surrender than I have ever made. I resolve, by his grace, to be more watchful over my temper and thoughts; not to speak harshly; to indulge in no vain, idle, resent-

ful, impatient, worldly imaginations; to strive after closer communion with God; to let no hour pass without lifting up my heart to him through Christ. Not to let a day pass without some thought of death: to ask myself every night, when I lie down, am I fit to die? To labour to do and to suffer the whole will of God, and to restrain all undue anxiety, by casting myself on God in Christ."

Matured piety is invariably productive of vigilant self-inspection. Aware that the state of the heart is what God especially regards, because it is there that all religious declension commences, the experienced Christian makes this the especial object of his attention; so it was with Miss More. On Sunday, June 21, she writes, "Up late last night: much harassed all the week by worldly company: my temper hurt, my heart secularized. I had looked forward to a peaceful Sunday—instead of this, an acute headache: spent the day in bed: little devotion, no spirituality: could not even think at all: had an hour's talk with Mr. Wilberforce: had reason to bless God that in my present difficulties this wise Christian friend was at hand to counsel and comfort me. Lord, grant that my many religious advantages may never appear against me. Many temptations this week to vanity: my picture asked for two publications: dedications: flattery without end: God be praised, I was not flattered but vexed. Twenty-four hours' headache makes one see the vanity of all this."

This vigilant self-inspection led her to detect in herself a predisposition, much too prevalent among Christians, to assign as the cause of her not being more entirely influenced by Christian principles, either some peculiarity in her situation, or some inefficiency in the means of instruction with which she was favoured. "I indulge," she says, "too frequently in the thought, how much better I might be had I fewer interruptions, more opportunities of religious improve-

ment, more pious friends, less worldly company. There is great self-deception in all this! The question ought rather to be, Do I make the most of my time? Lord, assist me so to do, and help me to bear patiently what I dislike."

While Miss More was in London she mentions it as a source of regret, that so few of the preachers she heard were plain and serious in their sermons. Whatever value she might formerly have set upon elegance of language and propriety of delivery, which, as is the case too frequently, especially with cultivated minds, she had much overrated; she now saw that it was quite possible to preach eloquently, without preaching the plain, simple truths of the gospel. Feb. 2nd, she writes, "Heard ——— preach:—elegant language—earnest and bold—but nothing to the heart; no food for perishing sinners. Lord, send more labourers into thy vineyard! Increase the number of those who preach Christ Jesus, and salvation through him only."

Towards the end of February, we find Miss More again at Fulham Palace, where she spent a month most delightfully with her favourite bishop. The anxiety she felt, lest she should value too highly earthly attachments, she thus expresses. "Lord, while I admire these Christian friends, let me not overrate them:—Christ is all in all. Oh, for a fuller persuasion of this!" She passed the following month at Teston with Mrs. Bouverie: almost the whole of the time she was much indisposed, but her mind was tranquil and resigned: she was less anxious to recover her health, than to derive from the affliction the good it was intended to produce. "I arrived here on Monday," she writes, "March 1st, and was seriously ill all the way. How many suffer painful journeys, who find no rest at night for the sole of the foot: but I rest with kind Christian friends, and find every comfort and alleviation. O,

for a sanctified suffering! Merciful Father! withdraw not thine hand until the work of sanctification is done in my soul." During her stay here, she attended the dying bed of a lady, and thus seriously adverts to the event. "I did not feel my heart properly affected, while attending the dying bed of Mrs. ——. O that I may lay to heart this lesson of mortality! Lord, prepare me for this state of pain, weakness, imbecility, if it be thy will I should pass through it. O that I could learn to die daily; I should then look, without fear, to the dark valley which lies before me. I cannot fix my thoughts intently on death, according to my resolution: it advances, but I do not advance in my preparation for it."

She left Teston early in April, for London, where she again spent a few weeks: her feelings on the occasion she thus records: "I am about to leave this place. Lord, forgive what I have neglected to do; and if any little good has been done by me, be pleased graciously to accept it, and pardon its imperfections." The watchful spirit she still cultivated, will be seen by the following entry in her journal, made little more than a week afterwards. "I have been a week here, hurried, worldly, with little serious reading, and less serious thoughts, except when I lie awake in the night: this is often a comfortable time with me; the world shut out, my conscience more tender, and my memory more quick, in bringing my sins before me:—my temper is sorely tried. Yesterday I was tempted to anger; to-day I bore the provocation. Lord, teach me to subdue all anger, and never let me think I am helping thy cause when indulging in a disposition so unbecoming. O that I could learn of Him who was meek and lowly of heart."

During her stay in London, she devoted all the time she could spare from her visiting engagements,

to the composition of her 'Strictures on Education.' She was increasingly sensible, of the danger of too frequent visits from the worldly. "This week," she writes, "has been so much spent in receiving visits from the great. Lord, preserve me from these temptations to vanity. O, let me feel more and more that I am a miserable sinner." Her supreme desire, now, was to employ the talents God had given her in promoting his glory: but, well knowing that this might be done from impure motives, she watched herself most narrowly. "I feel," she says, "full of schemes of charity, of doing good, of promoting God's glory, of writing for usefulness, not fame: yet I take little comfort in these evidences, because I feel not sufficiently the constraining love of Christ." The humbling views she had of herself, and the spirituality of mind, will be seen, by her remarks on receiving a present of Lord Orford's work, which, much against her wish, was embellished with her portrait, accompanied by some highly complimentary remarks. "Lord, keep me from self-sufficiency; and humble me, under a deep sense of the emptiness of earthly honours. Lord Orford had all *this* world could give;—great, witty, brilliant:—of how little use are these things to him now. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Grant me this purity, and an utter indifference to time, and deadness to the world."

About the beginning of June, 1798, she returned to Cowslip Green, where she resumed her delightful, though arduous labours. From these she was compelled to desist in August, owing to a severe attack of indisposition, originating chiefly in her great exertions. Adverting to this event, she writes:—"I went last week to Wadmore, the new place, and believe I spent too much time in the damp, half-finished house which we are about taking. On Saturday night I was attacked with one of my vio-

lent spasms in my head, so that I could not take my Sunday round. The pain continued almost intolerable during two days and two nights, and left my nerves in a high state of irritation. On Monday, being alone, I fell from the place where I was sitting, in a fainting fit. I dashed my face against the corner of a stone wall, and lay a long time without any signs of life. My sisters found me in a posture which must soon have suffocated me, with my face frightfully disfigured, and the floor sprinkled with blood. There was a strong contest between life and death, but it pleased my merciful God to raise me up. I was a good while before I had any clear ideas, but felt a sort of stupid serenity; no emotion, but a general feeling that I had not done enough for God; and a deep concern to know what poor Patty would do without my help. I am so disfigured, that you would scarcely know me; but I am full of gratitude, for, though my eyes make me look a perfect Mrs. Mendoza, yet the sight is safe; and had not my face received the bruises, my skull must have been fractured. You will be glad to hear that my mind has been calm, and that I felt the visitation to be sent in mercy. I write this two or three lines at a time, and cannot see to read it; but the bruises, though very bad, are nothing—they will in time disappear—but I must try to get my nerves in a better way."

Alluding to this event in her journal, she thus piously records her desires:—"Grant, Lord, that as my outward man decays, I may be renewed in the spirit of my mind. Perfect what is lacking in my faith and love, and let me possess my soul in patience. Refine my zeal, purify my motives, lead me to act with a holy simplicity, leaving the event to thee, who doest all things well. O for purer, holier converse—more disentanglement from the world, more heavenly meditation!" Nor was this a mere

evanescent feeling; for a month afterwards, when she had become in a measure convalescent, she writes in the same strain of unaffected piety:—"My head is seldom free from pain, but it does not yet purify my heart, though my gracious Father purposes it for that end. Lord, sanctify pain to me, make me as willing to suffer thy will as to do it."

It was in the autumn of this year that she closed her cheap 'Repository.' It had cost her much labour, but this she regarded not, so that it became the means of doing good. She gratefully, and with much humility, thus records her feelings on the occasion:—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, that I have been spared to accomplish that work. Do thou, O Lord, bless and prosper it to the good of many; and if it do good, may I give to thee the glory, and to myself the shame of its defects. I have devoted three years to this work. Two millions of tracts were disposed of during the first year. God works by weak instruments, to show that the glory is all his own."

In September, owing to the delicate state of her health, she was compelled to retire for some weeks to Bath. How devotedly pious she was, and what humbling views she had of herself, will appear by the following extracts from her journal:—"I have had more communion with God lately, especially in the night-watches. My thoughts have been more called off from worldly things, and less vexed by disappointments; still I find it hard to fix my mind by day on God and eternity. I seem more willing to work for God than to meditate upon him; yet this divine communion is the work of heaven, and how, without it, can I be prepared for that blessed state?"

She returned in November, with improved health, to renew her village labours; but she soon suffered a relapse, and in a few weeks was again compelled

to desist. These frequent attacks, though she felt them to be a source of much regret, yet they never led her to complain. Viewing them as parental chastisements, intended for her good, her greatest concern was, that she did not derive from them the benefit they were designed to impart. "Health not being, doubtless, good for me," she submissively writes, "I had a return of my head-ache. I might turn the time thus lost from more active duties to good account, by secret communion with my God and Saviour; but, alas! this is too little the case—partly because the intense pain in my head deprives me of the free exercise of thought, and gives an involuntary gloom and depression to my spirits—but more, I fear, from a habit of not sufficiently watching over my thoughts. It is to me a grievous truth, that I am, in general, least religious when I am sick. Lord, do thou give me grace to improve these seasons." Not long afterwards she again writes:—"Though I have been very ill for above a week, yet, by the grace of God, I am resigned to pain; but my thoughts, which ought at such times to be devoted to heavenly things, and to be directed straight forward to the goal to which I am tending, often wander amidst the vanities and cares of earth. Lord, raise my grovelling affections to thyself; disperse those earthly vapours which obscure my faith, and increase my desires after that world where sin and sorrow will be done away."

In the parish to which she had recently extended her labours, and which was thirty miles from Cowslip Green, she encountered very violent opposition from an opulent, but most ignorant farmer, the chief man in the parish, who resolved, to the utmost of his power, to thwart her exertions. Happily the curate was on her side; and, notwithstanding the determined opposition of her opponent, she succeeded in the erection of a large, commodious school-room;

and in a short time, between three and four hundred children and adults were brought under a course of instruction. "The opposition I have met with," she writes, "would excite your astonishment. The principal adversary is a farmer, of £1000 a year. He has laboured to ruin the poor curate, for favouring our cause, and declares that he shall never more now have a workman that will obey him. But in spite of this hostility, which far exceeded any thing I ever met with, I am building a house, and taking up things on a large scale, so that you must not be surprised if I get into gaol for debt. Providence, however, I trust, will carry me through the difficulties of this new undertaking. Already, between three and four hundred are under a course of instruction. The worst part of the story is, that thirty miles is too great a distance these short days; and when we get there, our house has neither doors nor windows; but if we live till next summer things will mend—and in so precarious a world as the present, a winter is not to be lost."

Not contented with their strenuous exertions to oppose her in the benevolent course she was pursuing, her opponents now resorted to defamation. To degrade her they published a humiliating history of her life, interspersing it with many most false, detracting statements. This, however, occasioned her but little uneasiness. She knew it was only what the most pious and exemplary had frequently to endure. It affected her far less than the flattery of her friends; their commendation, though well merited, she thought injudicious. "Vain thoughts," she says, "discompose my mind, and evil tempers show me the emptiness of that flattery with which I am at times almost overwhelmed. I hope, Lord, I can say truly, that I derive little pleasure from such praises, while my heart tells me how little I deserve them. I compare myself with the purity of thy law, and

then I see my own sinfulness too plainly to be pleased by flattering words. Heard of a silly, humiliating history of myself, just published, and can truly say, it gives me little or no mortification, nor did I feel any desire to contradict it."

At the close of 1798, during the whole of which Miss More had only enjoyed very short intervals of even partial health, we find her making acknowledgments indicative of piety the most ardent. "December 31. I am now, by the great mercy of God, brought to the end of another year. Enable me, Lord, to consider this mercy as I ought; and do thou strengthen my memory to recollect the numberless favours I have received at thy hands during the course of it. Enable me to call to mind my trials, and to lament my sins of the past year: Lord, forgive whatever fresh guilt I have contracted: O wash me clean in the blood of the everlasting covenant; forgive whatever I have done amiss: pardon my omissions of duty: supply all my wants out of thine abundant mercies: strengthen my weakness; subdue my pride; correct my self-love; root out my evil tempers; deliver me from open anger, secret resentment and discontents: deliver me from the corruptions of my own evil heart, from the suggestions of unbelief: and do thou sanctify to me the mercies and deliverances of the past year. Thou hast preserved my colleague and myself from many dangers: thou hast kept us in our going out and in our coming in, at unseasonable hours: thou hast carried us through much labour of body and much anxiety of mind: thou hast blessed in no common degree our unworthy labours in thy cause."

Notwithstanding the frequent attacks of indisposition, of which she had been, for the last year especially, the subject, yet, such had been her application, that by this time she had completed her work, entitled, 'Strictures on the modern System

of Female Education.' Early in 1799 she sent it to press, and it was published in the following March: she had composed it to expose and censure the then prevalent system of female education, which purpose it was admirably adapted to answer. Sentiments the most important were conveyed in a style the most animated and pleasing. It was well received by the public, and she had the gratification to receive the most pleasing testimonials of its merits, from individuals of the highest literary eminence.

Our remarks upon this excellent production, must necessarily be brief. The opening chapter is upon the influence of female manners on society, in which are some powerfully awakening remarks, suited to both sexes, and as seasonable at the present time as when they were first published. Having awakened the attention of her readers to the importance of the subject, she then states the objects, simply and explicitly, which ought principally to be had in view in education. "If," she says, "the heart, out of which are the issues of life, be the main concern; if the great business of education be to impart right ideas, to communicate useful knowledge, to form a correct taste and a sound judgment, to resist evil propensities, and, above all, to seize the favourable season for infusing principles and confirming habits; if education be a school to fit us for life, and life be a school to fit us for eternity, it may then be worth enquiring how far these ends are likely to be effected by the prevailing system. Is it not a fundamental error, to consider children as innocent beings, whose little weaknesses may perhaps want some correction, rather than as beings who bring into the world a corrupt nature, and evil dispositions, which it should be the great end of education to rectify? This appears to be such a foundation-truth, that, if I were asked what quality is most important in an instructor

of youth, I should not hesitate to reply, such a strong impression of the corruption of nature as should ensure a disposition to counteract it, together with such a deep view and thorough knowledge of the human heart, as should be necessary for developing and controlling its most secret and complicated workings."

Well would it be, were education invariably conducted on principles thus scriptural and rational: it would then, indeed, be a suitable preparative for our probationary state: infidelity would then be checked in its earliest growth, and things of the world would not be invested with an undue importance. "Forgetting this," as Miss More well writes, "do we not seem to educate our daughters exclusively for the transient period of youth, when it is to mature life that we ought to advert? Do we not educate them for a crowd, forgetting that they are to live at home? for the world, and not for themselves—for time, and not for eternity? Should we not reflect, that it is our business to form Christians, at least, as far as we have the power to do this, by the use of means?—that we have to educate not only rational, but accountable beings? Remembering this, should we not be solicitous to let our daughters learn of the well-taught, and associate with the well-bred? In training them, should we not carefully cultivate intellect, implant religion, and cherish modesty? Then, whatever is engaging in manners, would be the natural result of whatever is just in sentiment and correct in principle: softness would grow out of humility, and external delicacy would spring out of purity of heart: then, the decorums, the proprieties, the elegancies, and even the graces, as far as they are simple, pure, and honest, would follow as an almost inevitable result. To *follow* in the train of Christian virtues, and not to take the lead

of them, is the proper place which religion assigns to the graces."

Miss More ridicules, with just severity, the idea of making mere accomplishments the chief object of education. With equal severity she censures the practice of giving, or attempting to give, females an education unsuitable to the station in life in which they are to move. "Does it," she asks, "seem to be the true end of education, to make women of fashion dancers, singers, players, painters, sculptors, gilders, varnishers, engravers, embroiderers? Men are commonly destined to some profession, and their minds are consequently turned each to its respective object: would it not be strange, if they were called out to exercise their profession, with only a little general knowledge of the trades of other men, without any previous definite application to their own peculiar calling? The profession of ladies, to which the bent of their instruction should be turned, is that of daughters, wives, mothers, and mistresses of families: they should be therefore trained with a view to these several conditions, and be furnished with a stock of ideas and principles, qualifications and habits, ready to be applied and appropriated, as occasion may demand, to each of these respective situations; for, though the arts which merely embellish life must claim admiration, yet, when a man of sense comes to marry, it is a companion he wants, not an artist. It is not merely a creature who can paint, and play, and sing, and draw, and dress, and dance; it is a being who can comfort and counsel him; who can reason, and reflect, and feel, and judge, and discourse, and discriminate; one who can assist him in his affairs, lighten his cares, soothe his sorrows, purify his joys, strengthen his principles, and educate his children."

It is difficult to give even the most summary view of this interesting volume, without making

longer extracts from it than our limits will allow: it abounds with most useful remarks, on all points connected with female education. A distinction is well kept up, between what is beneficial, and what is intended only to embellish. Miss More never overlooks the paramount importance of making religion the basis of education: on this point she keeps her eye steadily fixed. The great evils of permitting youth to be unemployed, and of devoting too much time to the purposes of mere amusement, she suffers not to escape uncensured. Time is viewed as a talent, not to be sauntered away in idleness, but for the right use of which we are accountable. Such objects of pursuit for those who are not necessarily engaged, but whose station in life affords them much leisure, are pointed out, as accord entirely with a Christian spirit. "Young ladies," she remarks, "should be accustomed to set apart a fixed portion of their time, as sacred to the poor; whether in relieving, instructing, or working for them: and the performance of this duty must not be left to the event of contingent circumstances, or the operation of accidental impressions; but it must be established into a principle, and wrought into a habit. A specific portion of the day must be allotted to it, on which no common engagement must be allowed to entrench. The superintendence of the poor is a noble employment for ladies, and one for which they are peculiarly fitted: from their own habits of life, they are more intimately acquainted with domestic wants, than the other sex; and in certain instances of sickness and suffering, peculiar to their sex, they may be expected to have more sympathy. Let rich parents, then, be careful to train up their children to supply, by individual kindness, those cases of hardship which laws cannot reach: let them obviate, by an active and well-directed compassion, those imperfections of which the best constructed human

institutions must unavoidably partake; and by the exercise of private bounty, early inculcated, soften those distresses which can never come under the cognizance of even the best governments. By such means will a spirit of condescension be induced, and lessons of piety be learned, that will not soon be forgotten."

In every part of this volume we discover that the writer had a perfect acquaintance with the subject she was discussing, as well as an extensive knowledge of the human heart. She failed not to point out the best correctives to the prevalent vices of youthful minds, nor did she overlook the errors into which fond parents and partial friends very often fall in their conduct towards the young. Adverting to a censurable practice, much too common even in families the most consistent, she remarks: "The great and constant peril to which young persons in the higher walks of life are exposed, is the prevailing turn, and general spirit of conversation. Children who are well instructed, when at their studies, are, at other times, continually beholding the world, set up in the highest and most advantageous point of view. Seeing the world—knowing the world—standing well with the world—making a figure in the world—is spoken of as including the whole sum and substance of human advantages: they hear their education almost exclusively alluded to, with reference to the figure it will enable them to make in the world. In all companies, they hear everything that the world admires spoken of with admiration, rank flattered, fame coveted, power sought, beauty idolized, money considered as the one thing needful, and as the astonishing substitute for all other things: profit held up as the reward of virtue, and worldly estimation as the just and highest praise of laudable ambition: and after the very spirit of the world has been thus habitually infused into them all the

week, one cannot expect much effect from their being coldly and customarily told, now and then, on Sundays, that they must not love the world. To tell them, once in seven days, that it is a sin to gratify an appetite which you have been whetting and stimulating the preceding six, is to require from them a power of self-controul, which our knowledge of the impetuosity of the passions, especially in early age, should have taught, is impossible."

It would be easy to make many more extracts from this excellent treatise, equally instructing, did our limits permit us so to do. The chapters 'on the Importance of Forming good Habits—on Restraint —on Female Study—on the Benefits of Accuracy in Language—on Religion, and the Manner of teaching it to the Young—on the Practical Use of Female Knowledge—on Conversation—on the Danger of ill-directed Sensibility—on Dissipation—and on Public Amusement,' abound with remarks the most valuable. The three last chapters—'on a Worldly Spirit—on the Leading Doctrines of Christianity—and on the Duty and Efficacy of Prayer,' though not connected with the subject, are excellent throughout. The style in which the volume is composed, is perspicuous and animated. Occasionally, there is a want of precision, as if some parts of the volume had been composed too rapidly. There is the appearance, too, of the work not having been written continuously, but at intervals, which accounts for some few instances of tautology. Instances of this, however, are by no means frequent; and if the same thought is repeated, it is always with a new combination of phraseology, and a diversity of most happily conceived illustration. If its merits as a literary production were, by some of her friends, overrated, which would seem to have been the case, it arose from the excellence of the design, and the purely Christian spirit which breathed

through the production. In these respects it was impossible to speak of it too highly. Had her health permitted, and her inclination led her to have given it a careful revision, it would, doubtless, have been much improved. As it is, it is a most useful treatise, and one that no work on the subject, numerous as they now are, has yet superseded.

To this able production, Archdeacon Daubeny, one of Miss More's friends, who had approved highly of her former publications, thought it desirable to publish a reply, under the title of ' Letters to Hannah More, on her Strictures on Female Education.' The archdeacon gravely charged his fair antagonist with the Calvinistic and fanatic tendency of her strictures, warmly contending that its statements were dangerous and unscriptural. He evidently mistook the earnest inculcation of evangelical piety, for the errors he undertook to explode—a mistake too often committed by individuals who ought to be better informed. Miss More might, with the greatest ease, have refuted her opponent, but she was determined not to become a controversialist: thus the flame of controversy expired almost as soon as it was kindled. The archdeacon's Letters were soon forgotten—the Strictures will long be prized as a valuable work. Bishop Porteus—whose capability to form a correct opinion on the tendency of any theological tenet, none will deny to have been superior to the archdeacon's, and whom none will suspect of lending his support to fanaticism or Calvinism—in a charge which he delivered to his clergy about that time, thus bore his testimony to the merits of the Strictures, and to the value of Miss More's productions generally :—"The spirit of piety excited by the productions of many able and excellent writers, was certainly very considerable, but by none more than by those of the highly-approved Mrs. Hannah More, whose extraor-

dinary and versatile talents can equally accommodate themselves to the cottage and the palace; who, while she is diffusing among the lower orders of the people an infinity of little religious tracts, calculated to reform and comfort them in this world, and to save them in the next, is at the same time applying all the powers of a vigorous and highly-cultivated mind to the instruction, improvement, and delight of the most exalted of her own sex. I allude more particularly to her last work on female education, which contains such a fund of good sense, of wholesome counsel, of sagacious observation, of a knowledge of the world and of the female heart, of high-toned morality, and genuine Christian piety—and all this enlivened by such brilliancy of wit, such richness of imagery, such variety and felicity of allusion, such neatness and elegance of diction, as are not, I conceive, easily to be found so combined and blended together in any other work in the English language."

CHAPTER XII.

Opposition made to her village labours—Cause of its origin—Anxiety to conciliate her opponent—His extraordinary conduct—Compelled to break up one of her schools—Deep regret on the occasion—Christian submission—Malice of her enemies—Testimonials to her innocence—Republication of her works—Reasons for the publication—Remarks on the Stage.

Up to the autumn of 1799, Mrs. Moore had pursued her career of useful exertion, without encountering any formidable opposition. She had withdrawn herself from the allurements of fashionable life, and had become the decided advocate of true piety; but she had done this in such a Christian spirit, that much as many of her friends might dislike her religion, yet they ventured not openly to express their disapprobation. Her amiable conduct and most engaging manners, with her obvious sincerity, had hitherto secured her from that odium from the world, which is the usual result of avowed actual piety. It is not always thus—frequently it is painfully the reverse. The arrows of persecution have often been levelled at those whose conduct has been the most lovely and inoffensive. Nor was Mrs. More allowed any longer to escape; her character was now attacked with unrelenting rancour; and, for three years, every expedient which malice could invent was resorted to, to blacken her reputation. Her enemies spared no pains to circulate their evil reports; pamphlets were published,

full of the foulest abuse; statements were made which were utterly unfounded. She was accused of disaffection to the government—of secretly encouraging the circulation, in her schools, of revolutionary principles—of undermining and plotting the overthrow of the established church—and, above all, she was represented as a dangerous enthusiast.

The quarter whence this attack originated, rendered it peculiarly trying. Its chief agent was a magistrate, the curate of Blagdon, who had professed so much to admire both Mrs. More's productions and labours, that he earnestly requested her to establish one of her schools in his parish; stating, that though he had exerted himself in every possible way, he had not been able to accomplish the desirable object. It was not until she had been repeatedly importuned, that she consented to his request. She saw that an institution of the kind was much needed; but the schools she had already under the joint care of herself and sister, were so numerous, and situated at distances so remote, that she saw not by what means she could possibly increase her labours; hence she positively declined accepting the curate's first and second invitation. At length, however, after much earnest importunity by the churchwardens, as well as by the curate, she consented to make the attempt, which was happily followed, as in other cases, with great success. An approved master from another school was appointed; children, to the amount of two hundred, were soon collected; and Sunday reading, for the benefit of the parents as well as for the children, which had been followed by such happy results in other places, was soon established. The curate and his wife patronized these efforts by their occasional presence, and every thing went on comfortably and prosperously for many months. At the end of three years from its commencement, Mrs. More had the

gratification to receive from the curate's wife a letter containing the following interesting information. "The school," she writes, "goes on very well. There seems a serious spirit, working for good, among the common people. My husband wishes me to say, which he thinks is saying a great deal, that two sessions and assizes are past, and a third is now approaching, and neither a prosecutor, or plaintiff, or defendant has this parish, once so notorious for crimes and litigation, supplied; and, moreover, warrants for wood-stealing, and other petty pilfering, had become quite out of fashion." Little did Mrs. More imagine, that the very individuals who had thus frankly acknowledged the utility of her institutions, would in a few weeks denounce them as having a dangerous tendency, and be the most active among those who wished to break them up; yet so it was. Such is the instability of men—such, we should rather say, is the inconsistency of those who act not from principle, or whose activity proceeds from some loose and low motive!

The first symptom of this gentleman's disaffection was in a charge he brought against the schoolmaster. Mrs. More was not then in the neighbourhood: he wrote her, requesting, rather authoritatively, the instant dismissal of the man, for his alleged offence. In reply, Mrs. More assured him the subject should have her early and patient attention, immediately on her return. As the offence the poor man was accused of was no breach of morality, but merely related to some religious instruction he had ventured to give the poor of the parish, and to some statement he was reported to have made, this might have been deemed sufficient, but such was not the case. The curate wrote again, strongly urging his immediate dismissal. Mrs. More could not be induced to accede to this request; she thought it not right to dismiss the poor man without having

his case fairly investigated. The regard she entertained for him, made her unwilling thus precipitately to deprive him of his situation, and perhaps of the means of maintaining his family. That the curate, however, might have no just cause for further complaint, she consented to have the affair settled in her absence, by referring it to a neighbouring magistrate, by whose decision she was willing to abide. No conduct could have been more conciliatory; she could not have imagined it to have been otherwise than agreeable to the curate, as she knew he frequently associated with the magistrate she had referred to, who was far more likely to be partial to the curate, than to the schoolmaster or to herself, for with him she had no personal intimacy.

But greatly to her surprise, the curate positively refused thus to settle the affair. He reiterated his demands for the poor man's instant dismission, on the ground solely of his own accusation, and seemed determined not to be content with any thing short of entire compliance with his wishes. Anxious for an amicable adjustment of the dispute, Mrs. More at length gave directions that the meetings which had given rise to the misunderstanding should be discontinued. She did this not without considerable reluctance, having proof that, notwithstanding the little misstatements the schoolmaster was alleged to have made, yet his efforts had been productive of good. But peace was the object of her pursuit; a blessing which she probably thought this measure would have insured; she was, however, much mistaken. The Rev. gentleman was still dissatisfied; and demanded, in a tone far more imperative, the poor man's dismissal.

Mrs. More now perceived that his object was only the gratification of his own self-will, without any regard to the benefit of the poor. Hence she determined firmly to resist any further demands. Find-

ing such to be the case, he directed his attacks against her, charged her with fanaticism, and did all in his power to traduce her character. By artful manœuvres, and gross misrepresentations, he succeeded in gaining some to unite with him. Under the fair mask of zeal for the church, he so far imposed upon the bishop as to induce his lordship, though he very strongly censured the spirit he had evinced, and the conduct he had pursued, to declare himself in favour of the schoolmaster's dismissal.

Matters having come to this pitch Mrs. More thought it advisable to remove the schoolmaster, and as she saw no prospect of any good being done in a school, which was strongly opposed by the parochial minister, she thought proper to break it up, at least for a time. Whether she acted wisely in so doing, is perhaps matter of doubt. Certain it is that it cost her much painful feeling, and was the occasion of deep regret in the village. In a letter to Mr. Wilberforce she thus adverts to the subject, "In Blagdon is still a voice heard; lamentation and mourning; and at Cowslip Green, Rachael is still weeping for her children, and refuses to be comforted because they are not instructed. This heavy blow has almost bowed me to the ground, though I doubt not but that He who can bring real good out of much seeming evil, will eventually turn this shocking business to his glory. I struggled hard to keep my footing in the parish, and would not have valued any obloquy on my character, while the least chance of doing good remained; but when I considered the dreadful prejudices which my perseverance was every day exciting, I could no longer answer it to my conscience to persevere. 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?' is my frequent exclamation as I walk in my garden, and look at the steeple and village of Blagdon. I know, if I had a lively faith, I should rejoice at being thought worthy to suffer in the cause

of Christ; but I cannot help mourning for our Jerusalem.—I mourn to see that nothing is thought a crime but what they are pleased to call enthusiasm. I heartily wish I was a greater enthusiast in their sense of the word."

The means resorted to by the clergyman to justify his conduct and to attach guilt to that of Mrs. More, were as contemptible as they were extraordinary. Affidavits of what the poor villagers had been overheard to say, by the lowest characters, were industriously collected, in confirmation of Mrs. More's dangerous political, and religious sentiments. Yet could no charge worthy of the least notice be substantiated. It was even reported that she had prayed in the schools for the success of the French in their revolutionary proceedings, than which nothing could be more unlikely. So disgusted were many individuals, who had inconsiderately taken part with the clergyman, with the paltry and most improbable accusations brought against Mrs. More, that they turned round and became her warmest admirers. Yet were the proceedings most trying to her feelings, and they were rendered more vexatious, by the editor of the Anti-jacobin taking a most decided part with her opponents. In letters to Mr. Wilberforce she thus adverts to the subject: "My wounds are still fresh and raw, and want much wine and oil; this your kind letters never fail to administer; but I strive to look for higher and better consolations, and that these may be granted me I am persuaded I have your prayers. I mean to read for the fiftieth time your chapter on the overvaluing of human estimation. I have, perhaps, been too anxious on this head. Yet few people have cared less about general opinion, except as it has attacked me in that vital, vulnerable part on which one's usefulness depends. I have prayed and struggled earnestly not to be quite subdued in my *mind*, but I cannot command my *nerves*;

and though pretty well during the bustle of the day, yet I get such disturbed and agitated nights, that I could not answer for my lasting if the thing were to go on much longer. O may I be supported by seeing Him who is invisible! It is circulated among the worldly and Socinian clergy, that I have been in the constant habit of praying for the success of the French in my schools. How shall I one day admire that infinite Wisdom, which has thus decreed that I should be wounded just where I am most sensitive. My gracious Father, I doubt not, saw (though I knew it not) that I was too anxious about human opinion. You have, doubtless, seen the Anti-jacobin for June. I could give you a fresh instance of the treachery of that editor, and you would see how every thing has concurred to injure me. O for more faith and more deadness to the world! If this trial does but help to purify and fit me for a better, I ought to count it light."

'Severely trying as this persecution was to Mrs. More, yet her conduct under it was the most exemplary. She returned not evil for evil. Though her enemy evinced a bitterness of spirit almost unheard of, yet she resented it not, She passively, though not without great feeling, yielded to the stroke; and was evidently most anxious it should teach her some valuable lessons. Writing to a friend who had sent her a pressing invitation to spend a few weeks in town, she remarks, "I ought to tell you, in reply to your kind hint about my coming to town, that I have long resolved not to come at all. Battered, hacked, scalped, and tomahawked as I have been for three years, and continue to be, brought out of every mouth as an object of scorn, and abhorrence, I seem to have nothing to do in the world. I have, indeed, many kind friends, who anxiously press my coming, especially at Fulham; but I shall be better at home, for though it has pleased God to

give me great resignation to this long-protracted trial, yet it is still passive submission, and I want active courage to leave my retirement, and my round of quiet employments. I try to indulge neither resentment nor misanthropy. I pray for my enemies, who are very low, and very wicked. I have learnt the true value of human opinion, and much of the corruption not of the world only, but of my own heart. I have gotten stronger faith in the truth of Scripture. I feel a general spirit of submission; and there are times, but not often, when I can even rejoice, that I have been counted worthy to suffer in this cause. I hope I shall be able to bear with humble patience, these deep schemes for the destruction of my usefulness, by this attack on my reputation; but, alas! this frail body is neither hero nor Christian."

Nothing would have been less difficult, than for Mrs. More to have rebutted the absurd charges brought against her by her detractors. None could have done it more happily or with more effect: she could have thrown back upon her enemies all their accusations, with a severity that must have overwhelmed them with disgrace; but this she wisely determined not to do. "I shall certainly not," she writes, "answer the book written against me, should it even accuse me of all the crimes committed since the murder of Abel; but some of my friends may think it their duty." Either the vexation occasioned by this unexpected, most unprovoked, yet reiterated charge, or which is not unlikely to have been the case, the apprehension that she would have been betrayed into undue warmth, in the expression of her indignation, led her to determine to leave her cause to be vindicated by others. The result proved that she acted wisely. Her friends were most active in establishing her entire innocence of the charges wantonly and basely preferred against her. The

Bishop of Durham, who at first rather leaned to the side of her opponents, on discovering the groundless accusations they had made, and the revengeful spirit they had displayed, thus wrote her on the subject: "I perceive, dear madam, with real pain, the impression which certain unfounded and infamous calumnies have produced on your mind. With whatever eagerness they may have been circulated to serve the worst of causes, yet rest assured they will obtain little or no credit with those whose opinion is worth having. Let me entreat you, for your own sake,—for that of your most attached friends, among whom I trust you will always number me, and for that of the public, to treat your enemies with the contempt they deserve. Remember the vantage ground on which you stand, compared with your wretched antagonists. In a contest like that in which you are engaged, your character must and will have its weight, and truth will ere long prevail."

It had been falsely stated, that the Bishop patronized her principal enemy, and approved of his proceedings; in reference to this his lordship wrote: "Can a falsehood so gross as that which has been fabricated respecting my patronage of your opponent be believed? Can it be supposed, not only by those who know me, but by the world at large, that I should countenance the man who has vilified and traduced a person, to whose talents, virtues, and merits I have borne the most public testimony? Leave the issue to the recent declaration of the Somersetshire clergy in the neighbourhood of your schools, and all will be right." His lordship here refers to an united public declaration of the neighbouring clergy, to the innocence of Mrs. More of the base charges fabricated against her. A testimonial the most valuable and satisfactory, as those who bore it could not but be acquainted with the facts of the case, and were

like the Bishop, before they had examined the case, disposed to take the side of her opponent. In addition to this, the churchwardens and overseers of the different parishes where Mrs. More's schools had been established, issued a printed declaration, of the beneficial results which had, to their knowledge, followed her labours.

These exertions were at length crowned with complete success. Mrs. More emerged from the severe ordeal not only with her character unblemished, but with her Christian graces much brightened, while every renewed effort of her enemy to degrade her, served only to plunge him the more deeply into disgrace. It was not, however, till the summer of 1802 that she regained her accustomed cheerfulness, and rose above the trial. An event the most joyful to all her friends. Many were the congratulations she received on the occasion. "I cannot," writes the Bishop of Durham, "too speedily congratulate you, and your whole family, my dear madam, on the turn which affairs have taken at Blagden; triumph you do not want on any other ground, than the vindication of your own conduct, and the innocence of your vilified schoolmaster. You will more easily imagine than I can describe, the pleasure I feel at the relief which your mind must now experience, and, as I trust, your health also, in a corresponding degree." All her friends were delighted again to enjoy her company, with which, much to their regret, they had been deprived for nearly three years.

Mrs. More did not, however, remain for this lengthened period unemployed. The time she could spare from her schools, which she continued to superintend, notwithstanding all that was said against them, she devoted to the arrangement of a complete edition of all her then published works, which, at the earnest request of her friends, she was induced to republish in one uniform edition, as it had

become difficult to procure a copy of some of her most valuable pieces. She prefixed to the whole a well-written general preface, in which she enters minutely into her reasons for the publication. "These scattered pieces," she remarks, "besides that they have been suffered to pass through successive editions with little or no correction, were, in their original appearance, of all shapes and sizes, and utterly unreduceable to any companionable form." With characteristic humility she adds: "I should blush to reproduce so many slight productions of my early youth, did I not find reason to be still more ashamed that after the lapse of so many years, my progress in the attainment of Christian knowledge, will be found to have been so inconsiderable. May I be permitted to declare, that at no period of my life did I ever feel such unfeigned diffidence at the appearance of even the smallest pamphlet, as I now feel at sending this, perhaps too volumnious collection, into the world. This self-distrust may naturally be accounted for by reflecting, that this publication is deliberately made, not only at a time of life when I ought to know my own faults, and the defects of my writings, but at such a distance from the moment when the several pieces were first struck out, that the mind has had time to cool from the hurry of composition, and the judgment leisure to rectify false notions, and correct rash conclusions. The revision is made at a period when the eye is brought by a due remoteness into that just position, which gives a clear and distinct view of things; disperses the illusions of vision, scatters the mists of vanity, reduces objects to their natural size, restores them to their exact shape, makes them appear to others such as they really are, and such as perhaps they have long appeared to all, except the author. That I have added to the mass of general knowledge one original idea, or to the stock of virtue one original sentiment, I

do not presume to hope. But that I have laboured assiduously to make that kind of knowledge which is most indispensable to common life, familiar to the unlearned, and acceptable to the young; that I have laboured to inculcate into both the love and practice of that virtue, of which they had before derived the principles from higher sources, I will not deny to have attempted."

This preface is interesting, both because it is illustrative of the solidity of her judgment, on a variety of subjects, and descriptive of the prevalent bias of her mind; more especially of her humility during a period of most severe trial. "To what is called learning," she modestly remarks, "I have never had any pretensions: life and manners have been the objects of my unwearied attention; and every kind of study and habit has, more or less, recommended itself to my mind, as it has, more or less, reference to these objects. Considering this world as a scene of much action, and of little comparative knowledge,—not as a stage for exhibition, or a retreat for speculation, but as a field on which the business which is to determine the concerns of eternity is to be transacted; as a place of low regard as an end, but of unspeakable importance as a means; a scene of short trial, but lasting responsibility,—I have been contented to pursue myself, and to present to others, those truths, which if obvious and familiar, are yet practical and of general application; things, which, if of little span, are of great use. I have pursued, not that which demands skill and insures renown, but,

"That which before us lies in daily life."

I am not insensible to human estimation: to the approbation of the wise and the good, I have been perhaps too sensible: but I check myself, in the indulgence of this dangerous pleasure, by recollecting that the hour is fast approaching, when no human

verdict, of whatever authority in itself, and however favourable to its object, will avail any thing, if not crowned with the acquittal of that Judge in whose power is life eternal. Every emotion of vanity dies away, every swelling of ambition subsides, before the consideration of this solemn responsibility: and though I would ever pay all due deference to the opinion of private critics, and of the public, yet, my anxiety with respect to the sentence of both is considerably diminished, by the reflection, that, not the writings, but the writer, will soon be called to another tribunal, to be judged on far other grounds than those on which the decisions of literary statutes are framed; a tribunal, at which the sentence passed, will depend on far other causes than the neglect of the rules of composition."

Mrs. More's object in this publication was the same, as in fact it had chiefly been in each separate work, not to acquire literary distinction nor to promote her own pecuniary interest, but to benefit the public. Adverting to this at the close of her preface, she thus seriously writes: "With abundant cause to be humbled, at the mixed motives of even my least exceptionable writings, I am willing to hope, that in those of later date, at least, vanity has not been the governing principle: and if, in sending abroad the present collection, some sparks of this inextinguishable fire should struggle to break out, let it be at once quenched, by the reflection, that of those persons whose kindness stimulated, and whose partiality rewarded my early efforts, the eyes of the greater part are closed, to open no more in this world. Even while the pen is in my hand, recording this remark, more than one affecting corroboration of its truth occurs: may this reflection, at once painful and salutary, be ever at hand, to curb the insolence of success, or to countervail the mortification of defeat: may it serve to purify the motives of action, whilst it inspires resignation to the event: and

may it effect both, without diminishing the energies of duty, without abating the activity of labour."

Aware of the dissimilarity of the statements made in her earlier and later works, on the subject of theatrical amusements, Mrs. More scarcely knew whether it would be advisable to suppress her dramatic productions, or to print them with the rest: she at length determined, as there was nothing in them immoral, on their appearance in the work; resolving, at the same time, in a lengthened preface, to explain her motives for so doing, and to record the reasons for her altered views. "I am desirous," she says, "to anticipate a censure, which the critical reader will be ready to bring forward, on the apparent inconsistency between the contents of these volumes, composed of dramatic pieces, and several sentiments, not unfrequently introduced, in some of the other volumes, respecting the dangerous tendency of those public amusements, in which dramatic entertainments are included. The candid reader will be able to solve the paradox, when it is intimated at what different periods of life these different pieces were written: the dates, were they preserved, would show that the seeming disagreement proceeds not from an inconsistency, but from a change of sentiments."

That the evils of theatrical amusements far exceed any benefit arising therefrom, has been proved unanswerably by many excellent writers. It is, however, interesting, to have the views of one on the subject who had enjoyed every facility for forming a correct opinion. "From my youthful course of reading," she remarks, "and early habits of society and conversation, aided, perhaps, by that secret bias which inclination gives to the judgment, I was led to entertain that common, but, as I must now think, delusive hope, that the stage, under certain regulations, might be converted into a school of virtue; and that, though a bad play would always

be a bad thing, yet the performance of a good one might become not only harmless, but useful; nothing more being required than a correct judgment, and a critical selection, to transform a pernicious pleasure into a profitable entertainment. On these grounds I was led to flatter myself, that it might be rendering that inferior service to society, which the fabricator of safe and innocent amusements may reasonably be supposed to confer, to attempt some theatrical compositions, which should, at least, be found to be written on the side of virtue and modesty, neither holding out any corrupt image to the mind, nor any impure description to the fancy. As these pieces were written at an early period of my life, under the above impressions, I feel it my duty not to send them afresh into the world, without prefixing to them a candid declaration of my altered view. I mean not to deny, that of all public amusements, the performance of a well-written tragedy is the most interesting, the most intellectual, the most accommodated to the tastes and capacities of a rational being; that, in fact, it is almost the only one which has mind for its object, having the combined advantage of addressing itself to the imagination, the judgment, and the heart. With this superiority in point of mental pleasure, it is not to be wondered at, that the admirers of the stage should cherish a hope, that, under certain restrictions, and in an improved form, it might be made to contribute to instruction as well as pleasure. But, what it might be under an imaginary state of things, it is not easy to know, nor important to enquire: nor indeed is it the soundest logic, to argue on the possible goodness of a thing, which, in the present circumstances of society, is doing positive evil. Would it not be more safe and simple to form our judgment on the more visible and rational grounds of its actual state, and from the present effects which it is known to produce?"

In this masterly preface, if Mrs. More employs no new arguments to expose the evils inseparable from the stage, yet she places the subject in a striking and most convincing light. She did not, however, attempt the conviction of the mere votaries of pleasure; this, she knew, would indeed be a vain attempt: her remarks were addressed to a different class, less numerous now, it is hoped, than formerly, but even at the present time too frequently to be met with; individuals, who, with great regularity and consistency of conduct, and some profession of religion, occasionally visit the theatre, and allow their children the same indulgence. "To those conscientious persons," she remarks, "the question, then is, not whether those who risk everything may not risk this also; but, whether the more considerate Christian might not find it worth while to consider if the amusement in question be entirely compatible with his avowed character; whether it be entirely consistent with the clearer views of one who professes to live in the sure and certain hope of the immortality brought to light by the gospel: for, however weighty the arguments in favour of the superior *rationality* of plays may be found in the scale, when one amusement is balanced against another, yet this will not quite vindicate it in the opinion of the conscientious Christian, who will not allow himself to think, that of two evils *either* may be chosen: his amusements, he will be aware, must be blameless as well as ingenious, safe as well as rational, moral as well as intellectual: they must have nothing in them likely to excite any of the tempers which it is his daily task to subdue; or any of those passions which it is his constant business to keep in order: his chosen amusements must not add to the weight which he is commanded to lay aside, nor irritate the besetting sin against which he is to struggle; they should not obstruct that spiritual-mindedness, which he is told

is life and peace: they should not influence that lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and pride of life, which he is forbidden to gratify. A religious person, who occasionally indulges in an amusement not consonant to his general views and pursuits, inconceivably increases his own difficulties, by whetting tastes and exciting appetites, which it will cut him out so much work to counteract, as will greatly overbalance the short and trivial enjoyment; nay, the more keen his relish for the amusement, the more exquisite his discernment of the beauties of composition, or the graces of action may be, the more important will he find it to deny himself the gratification which is procured at the slightest hazard of his higher interests."

These remarks, to which no unprejudiced, considerate person can make any exception, were not made by a mere novice, nor by one whose mind had been soured and irritated by worldly disappointments. Mrs. More was in the meridian of life when she penned these sentences. Few could more easily have succeeded in writing for the stage, had she made the attempt; none could more keenly relish its beauties. It was, however, her deliberate opinion, slowly and, apparently, almost reluctantly formed, that its benefits, if any, were very few, and its evils many. Nor was it against those departments of the stage which, on any rational grounds, are indefensible, but to the highest departments of theatrical amusements. Following up her remarks to the same discreet characters she was before addressing, she thus writes: "We give those sober frequenters of the theatre, who go but seldom, and never, except to what they call a good play, all due praise for their comparative sobriety; but while they go at all, the principle is the same, for they sanction, by going sometimes, a diversion which, on Christian principles, is indefensible. It is not a justification

of the amusement, that the play in question is more chaste in the sentiment, more pure in the expression, and more moral in the tendency, than those which are avowedly objectionable; though I readily concede all the degrees of distinction—and very important they are—between such compositions and those of the opposite character. But there will, generally speaking, remain, even in tragedies, otherwise the most unexceptionable, provided they are sufficiently impassioned to produce a powerful effect on the feelings, and have spirit enough to become popular, an essential, radical defect. There almost inevitably runs, through the whole web of the tragic drama, a prominent thread of false principle. Generally, the leading object of the poet is to erect a standard of honour, in direct opposition to the Christian standard; and this is not done subordinately, incidentally, occasionally; but worldly honour is the very soul and spirit, and life-giving principle of the drama. Honour is the religion of tragedy; it is her moral and political law; her dictates form its institutes: fear and shame are the capital crimes in her code. Against these, all the eloquence of her most powerful pleaders—against these all her penal statutes, pistol, sword, and poison, are in full force. Injured honour can only be vindicated at the point of the sword; the stains of injured reputation can only be washed out in blood. Love, jealousy, hatred, ambition, pride, revenge, are too often elevated into the rank of splendid virtues, and form a dazzling system of worldly morality, in direct opposition to that religion whose characteristics are charity, meekness, peaceableness, long-suffering, gentleness, forgiveness. The fruits of the spirit and the fruits of the stage, if the parallel were followed up, as it might easily be, would perhaps exhibit as pointed a contrast as human imagination could conceive. Even in those plays in which the principles which false

honour teaches, are neither professedly inculcated nor vindicated; nay, where the practices alluded to are reprobated, yet, the hero who has been reproved from sin during four acts, by the sage remonstrance of some interfering friend, is, in the conclusion, when the intrigue is dexterously completed, when the passion is worked up to its acmé, and the impetuosity of the hero can no longer be restrained, made either to stab his best benefactor, or, as it more frequently happens, himself. Still, notwithstanding this criminal catastrophe, the hero has been exhibited through all the preceding scenes as such a combination of perfections, that censure for his crime has been swallowed up in pity. The murderer is absolved by the weeping auditory, who are ready, if not to justify the crime, yet to vindicate the criminal. The drowsy moral at the close, slowly attempts to creep after the poison of the piece; but it creeps in vain:—it can never expel what is for ever beyond its reach; for one stroke of feeling, one natural expression of the passions, be the principle right or wrong, carries away the affections of the auditor beyond any of the poet's force of reasoning to controul. And they know little of the power of the dramatic art, or of the conformation of the human mind, who do not know that the heart of the feeling spectator is always at the command of the poet, who snatches him, with uncontrolled dominion, when and where he will. To counteract the bias given to the passions, all the flowers of rhetoric, all the flights of mere poetry, and all the blunted weapons of logic united, will be ineffectual. The concluding antidote never defeats the mischief of the piece; the effect of the smooth moral is instantly obliterated, while that of the indented passion is perhaps indelible."

These were some of the powerful reasons, thus publicly avowed by Mrs. More, respecting the stage.

Others equally illustrative of its extremely pernicious effects, especially on the young and inexperienced, might be given, but we forbear. It would, however, be unwise, as the question often discussed among Christians, how far it is justifiable to read plays, not to advert to her remarks on this subject. She contends, truly, that there is a wide difference between reading compositions of this kind and seeing them performed. "To read," she says, "a moral play, is little different from reading any other innocent poem; the dialogistic form being a mere accident, and no way affecting the moral tendency of the piece. Let none object to this distinction, as if it were fanciful or arbitrary. In the exhibition of a play, is it the mere repetition of the speeches which implies danger? No; were the best reader to read the play, without scenic decorations, without dress, without gesticulation, would such an exhibition be numerously, for any length of time, attended. What, then, chiefly draws the multitude? It is the semblance of real action given to the piece, by different persons supporting the different parts, and by their tones, their gestures, brightening, heightening the representation into a kind of enchantment. It is the concomitant pageantry; it is the splendour of the spectacle, and the show of the spectators. These are the concomitants of the stage, which produce the danger; these give a pernicious force to sentiments, which, when read, merely explain the mysterious action of the human heart, but which, when thus uttered, thus accompanied, become contagious and destructive;—these, in short, make up a scene of temptation and seduction, of over-wrought voluptuousness and unnerving pleasure, which ill accords with working out our salvation with fear and trembling, or with that frame of mind which implies that the world is crucified to us, and we unto the world."

After all, it may be doubted, whether Mrs. More's ardent love of the drama did not unduly bias her mind in its favour. Certain it is, that many of the evils she justly states as inevitably arising from scenic representations, almost equally follow from the perusal of the drama in the family, or in private, even in its most select form. If the plays of Shakspeare can ever be read with advantage, which perhaps may be the case, on account of his masterly delineations of the working of man's heart in every situation of life, yet it must be by those whose principles are well grounded, and whose judgments are sufficiently sound to reject the evil, and choose the good—a task not always easy to be performed. Dramatic productions, with whatever care selected, are of very questionable utility for youth of either sex, except such as are intended to illustrate portions of Scripture, and even these are often of little value. The works of Shakspeare contain moral sentiments of surpassing power and beauty, but they are debased by a mixture of so much alloy, as to neutralize, if not to destroy, all the good effects which they might otherwise produce.

CHAPTER XIII.

Takes possession of Barley Wood—Continued opposition of her enemies—Consistent conduct under an attack of illness—Decided piety—Christian watchfulness—Devout gratitude—Searchings of heart—Self-suspicion—Visit to Cheltenham—Efforts to suppress contention—Means to sustain the vigour of piety—Begins writing 'Hints towards forming the Character of a young Princess'—Reasons for composing it—Its publication—Remarks on its merits.

In 1802, Mrs. More took possession of an ample and commodious house which she had erected on an estate she had purchased in the parish of Wrington. She had long found her cottage at Cowslip Green inconveniently small for the comfortable accommodation of the numerous visitors she was almost daily receiving, and had determined to embrace the first opportunity that offered, of having a house suited to her mind. Her new estate, which she named Barley Wood, was laid out most tastefully under her own eye. So much were her sisters delighted with it that they gave up their establishment at Bath, and it hence became their joint residence. Here she hoped to pass her remaining years, not in useless inactivity, but in comparative obscurity, diligently endeavouring, unobtrusively, to do good to others, and seeking for herself the enjoyment of that intercourse with heaven which constitutes the highest felicity of mortals, and which she now sought with increasing earnestness.

But her circle of friends was so numerous, the sympathy felt for her on account of her recent persecution so general, and the opinion formed of her judgment on all matters so highly esteemed, that Barley Wood was seldom free from visitors. All were sure of a kind, hospitable, reception; she was ever accessible to all. Those who sought instruction, or advice, were never rudely repulsed. Her opinion was candidly but frankly given; and many were benefited by it. Her conversation was always cheerful, instructing, and interesting. Her mind was spiritual, and her wish evidently was, whatever she did, to do all to the glory of God.

Grieved as she still was at the determined efforts her enemies continued to make to counteract the good she might do in her schools,—and she felt this exceedingly,—yet all her sympathies were in active exercise for the sorrows of others. She wept with those that wept, and gladly poured the balm of comfort into the disconsolate mind. Writing to Lady Waldegrave, who had been suddenly bereaved of an amiable, virtuous daughter, under circumstances peculiarly distressing, she remarks: "I have always hoped and believed that you were one of the favoured children of your heavenly Father, by the many trials to which you have been called; this recent sorrow only strengthens my opinion. He does not willingly afflict, but has always some gracious, though not obvious purpose. We must adore *now*, we shall understand *hereafter*. We shall then see laid open all the gracious purposes and merciful reasons of these afflictions, which now seem so mysterious and inexplicable. These are the seasons which try our faith, and which, by calling it into exercise, prove it to be a really living, comforting, and supporting principle.

Very soon after Mrs. More had taken possession of her new house, she suffered a severe attack of ill-

ness. The calm state of her mind under it, and the Christian spirit she evinced towards her enemies, who still pursued their unoffending victim with insatiable malice, she discloses in a letter to Mr. Wilberforce. "My friends assured me I should be quite well when I got to this new situation, but I have been confined to my bed almost ever since I entered it. This reminds me of the old remark, that the first spot of earth, of which Abraham took possession in the land of promise, was a grave. It is a salutary reflection. I agree with you in deploring the dark prospect as to religion. Indeed it is the reigning spirit and temper of the times that makes me chiefly lament the Blagdon business. Alas! it is not me, individually; I am only a petty victim."

Alluding to a circumstance which is of too frequent occurrence—the union of men of opposite characters, when religion is to be opposed—she adds, "Could such a man as B——, with principles equally hostile to the church and state, be supported by men professing themselves warm friends to both, if they were not blinded, and if a general hostility to serious religion were not a common rallying point to two descriptions of men opposite enough in all other respects? As to myself, I bless God that though broken down in nerves and health, my mind is in general quiet and resigned. 'It is enough for the servant to be as his Lord.' I resolve not to defend myself, let them bring what charges they will. If it please God to put an end to my little (how little!) usefulness, I hope to be enabled to submit to his will, not only because I cannot help it, but because it is holy, and just, and good."

Although Mrs. More's health continued, during the whole of this year, in so delicate a state as to prevent the possibility of any very close mental application, yet she appears to have read much, and the works she selected showed the depth of her piety

and the soundness of her mind. Writing to an intimate friend she remarks, "I have fagged hard of late at good old 'Bishop Reynolds,' a fat folio of near 1200 pages, which I have almost got through. Such solid Christianity and such deep views of the sinfulness of man! And as to tediousness, I rather like it—I can never pick up any sustenance out of your short, scanty books. Of new books I know nothing, for I am not in the way here of borrowing or hiring, and I cannot afford to buy, having spent all my money in trees. Of books, however, it may in general be said—the old are better."

This decided preference for the works of our old divines, while it proves the vigour of her mind, and the soundness of her judgment, is equally illustrative of her growing maturity in Christian knowledge. Mere novices in piety can never be brought to relish these elaborate productions; something less solid suits their vitiated taste, and is better adapted to their feeble minds. One might almost form a tolerably correct estimate of an individual's theological attainments, if not of his actual piety, by the value he attaches to these excellent though voluminous writers.

As the years passed away they had a mellowing effect upon Mrs. More's mind. Her judgment became better informed and her piety more ardent. The persecution she still endured, chiefly because of her adherence to primitive Christianity, had no enfeebling effect upon her piety. On the contrary, it rather imparted to it increasing vigour: the more she was opposed, so much the more zealous, watchful, and diligent she became. Throughout the whole of 1803, the state of her mind was decidedly spiritual. At its commencement she thus piously records her feelings: "Since I have been in some measure drawn off from the pursuits of the world, and have laboured, though in a most imperfect man-

ner, to assist others in the knowledge of the truth; my life being active and my health bad, I find I have much neglected making a stated record of my feelings; but being now brought, by the will of God, to a life of more leisure, I resolve, through the help of his grace, to resume it. And do thou, Lord, grant that I may be more fixed in my thoughts, more frequent in self-examination, more heedful of the emotions of my own mind, and more mindful of death. I resolve, O Lord, to commence this year with a solemn dedication of myself to thee: thine I am; I am not my own; thou hast bought me with a price. Let me henceforth live to him who loved me and gave himself for me. Sanctify to me, Lord, my long and heavy trials; remove them not till they have answered those ends they were sent to accomplish."

In a letter to a friend, written about the same time, she remarks, in a strain equally serious: "My old friend, Lady Aylesbury is gone. Cadell, with whom I set out twenty-eight years ago, in literary connexion, is gone. He, very healthy, taken,—I, very sickly, spared. Owen, Cambridge, Bennett, Langton, all lately dead; besides numbers of less note, but younger and more promising, who have been dropping on the right hand and on the left. Yet how hard is it to bring the mind seriously, earnestly, and practically to prepare for one's own call. When disappointments, sufferings, and trials, drive one off from one refuge, the vain and deceitful heart snatches at another. There are so many shades of worldliness that it is easy to have renounced the ball, the play, ambition, extravagance, and dissipation, without having made much of any advance towards God; and it is easy to wish for heaven, and yet very hard to get a heavenly mind."

A few days afterwards we find her in a spirit of calm submission to the will of God, expressing very earnest desires that she might be able to act with

Christian forbearance. Lord, let me see more and more the reason of this late visitation:—yet I *do* see it. I said in my prosperity, I shall never be moved; I set too much store by human opinion though I then knew it not. May these trials lead me to look to Him, who, when he was reviled reviled not again—who endured the contradiction of sinners against himself. Heard to-day of new attacks from the old quarter; Lord, grant that I may bear this with holy resignation. If reputation be the sacrifice thou requirest, thy will be done. I daily endeavour to look less to human applause and more to the favour of God. Grant, Lord, that I may not be content with *saying* this, but help me to *do* it."

The watchful spirit she still cultivated, and the impartial inspection of her motives and feelings she still practised, will be seen by the following extracts: "I fear I am become more intent on reading Scripture and cultivating retirement, than willing to promote the welfare of others. Hitherto I have erred on the other side; the danger now is, lest the slanders I have met with should drive me to be too cautious and silent. Various trials operating upon a nervous frame, and keenly feeling temper, have disturbed my peace and health—I fear to the discredit of religion. Yet I am thankful to God that my mind is not only placable but serene. Instead of being disturbed by every petty event, I now endeavour not to think any thing of much importance which is to end with the present life. I find the petty, worldly turmoils ruffle the temper and take off from spiritual mindedness. Against these I resolve to be more on my guard; with sorrow I confess, that though it has pleased God, by various trials, both in my health and fame, to wean me from what is called the world, and though I have, by his grace, obtained a considerable deadness to honours, pleasure, and human applause, yet I have been grieved to find the same spirit still

at work on nearer occasions, and in the daily, petty affairs of life. I am discomposed by trifles which I despise, and feel inequalities of temper at trifling faults in others; am impatient of their follies and weaknesses, forgetting how often I myself offend, not only against them, but against infinite mercy, and inexhaustible patience. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ."

Though she was not, at this time, suffering under very severe illness, yet her health was so delicate as to confine her almost entirely from public worship, a circumstance which she thus regrets: "Formerly, I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go up unto the house of our God;' now, I endeavour to submit cheerfully to be detained by sickness from church; yet it is a great hinderance to spiritual improvement, and I ascribe it partly to this that I have scarcely ever known any one who has lived long abroad retain much serious piety. I thank thee, Lord, that my lot was cast in a land of light and knowledge, where the name of Christ is publicly professed, and where Christianity is preached in its purity. I bless thee for thy day, thy word, and thy Spirit. Grant, Lord, that my advantages, may not one day appear against me, and that, while strangers are called from the east and the west, I, with all my means, may not be shut out of thy kingdom."

It is characteristic of genuine piety, to watch the movements of Providence, and gratefully to ascribe to it every instance of preservation, however seemingly incidental or unimportant. Nor is it less so, thankfully to receive from the Father of mercies, chastisements as well as favours, knowing that they are equally designed for our benefit. In a pious strain of gratitude, Mrs More thus records her birthday emotions: "How slight was the prospect this time twelvemonth that I should live to see the return of this day: I would enumerate some of the mercies of

the past year :—Raised up from a long and dangerous sickness—from a broken state of nerves and spirits—restored to a serene and resigned frame of mind—able to thank God, not only for amended health and spirits, for the many comforts and alleviations of my long and heavy trial, but for the trial itself. It has shown me more of the world, more of its corruptions, more of my own heart, more of the instability of human opinion, while it has weaned me from many attachments which were too strong to be right. Twice have I been preserved from injury when my horse fell under me. My schools are not only continued, but God has raised up a powerful protector in the new bishop. He has enabled me to meet without resentment those whom I knew to be my enemies. He has given me a new and a delightful habitation, and continued to me many friends. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul!' May I seriously renew my repentance for the sins of the past year, and enter upon a new course of holy obedience. I reckon it among my mercies that I have escaped the bustle and worldliness of a Bath winter, and have so much time at my disposal. O that I could spend it to the glory of the great Giver!"

These outbreakings of her heart show that her piety was daily becoming more mature, and her desires to be useful more intense. Yet with all this progress in holiness she had the most abasing view of herself. Augmenting piety has invariably this effect. The higher an individual rises in the scale of Christian knowledge and Christian feeling, so much the lower will he ever appear in his own estimation: the imperfections of the most matured Christian, and the elevated conceptions he forms of divine purity will ever preserve him from anything like self-satisfaction. It was thus with Mrs. More's experience. At the same time that she was com-

plaining of herself she was making visible advances in piety. "In the night," she writes, "I have sometimes much comfortable intercourse with my heavenly Father, and feel resigned to his will, whether it be that I should pass through honour or dishonour, evil report or good report, life or death; but when the business of the day returns, my own heart, and the frivolous conversation of others, sadly diminish these good impressions. O for more permanent spirituality of mind!" Under another date she writes:—"I find it hard work to keep up near views of eternity when alone, and the more hard, as these subjects are banished from company. Take away, O Lord, this heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh." The last Sunday in February, she records her feelings in nearly the same strain:—"I am grieved to find, on this day, that though I have leisure, I have not the right relish for serious objects. I find it impossible, alas! to confine my thoughts to any devout contemplation for any length of time: 'Who shall deliver me from this body of death and sin?'"

Ever jealous over herself, Mrs. More now became suspicious lest her attention to her rural pursuits, in which she took great delight, should become detrimental to her piety. "I feel," she says, "in finishing my garden, that I have too much anxiety to make it beautiful: that it occupies too much of my attention, and tends to give worldly thoughts a predominance in my mind. How imperfection mixes itself with all that we do! This innocent relaxation, which Providence seems kindly to have provided for me so seasonably, in the time of distress and depression, is in danger of becoming a snare, by fixing me too much to that world, from which I am, in other respects, trying to free myself. May I ever remember, that whatever keeps the mind from God, or that stops the heart short of heavenly things,

however harmless in itself, becomes sinful, by drawing the time, and thoughts, and affections from their proper and legitimate objects."

After a long season of confinement, on being permitted again to attend public worship, she felt deeply anxious rightly to improve the privilege. "By the great favour and goodness of God, I have been enabled this day to go to church. Adored be thy holy name, that I again enjoy this privilege. May I lift up my heart in gratitude for every spiritual blessing —for sabbaths—for ordinances—for minister. May I be less unfruitful under these multiplied advantages! Every opportunity increases my responsibility. Never let me forget, that it was to professors, to the instructed, to those who, because they had the means, made sure of salvation, that the Lord said, 'Depart from me, I never knew you.' Better to have been a Pagan, a blind idolator, than a disobedient or unprofitable Christian."

In her recorded feelings, at this period, we discern the characteristic alternations of delight and regret, and often of hope and fear, which distinguish the Christian. Her highest pleasure was in spiritual pursuits, especially when she could engage in them with undiverted attention. She read many theological works, always selecting such as were the most devotional, practical, and spiritual. Conversation on serious subjects, with some pious, intelligent friends, she prized very highly. Yet she remarks, in a tone of self-complaint, "I have to lament that the impression of reading and conversation is so soon effaced. I am sometimes enabled to keep up, during my waking intervals in the night, devout thoughts. O that I could carry them more with me, in my intercourse with the world! But things the most trivial and contemptible often occupy, distract, and indispose my soul for its proper work. I fear I have gone back in religion this week. I find,

with sorrow, that I have need of continual calls and awakenings, for when all goes on peacefully I easily degenerate into sloth and deadness.

On a mind naturally so sensitive as that of Mrs. More, it is not surprising that the repeated attacks of her enemies, persevered in with such unexampled energy, should have had some injurious effect. The most innocent and virtuous cannot always endure, undismayed and uninjured, the shafts of ridicule and reproach. Though the charge of enthusiasm alleged against her was too ridiculous to be credited, yet the watchful spirit she kept over herself, led her to suspect it had made her less willing to converse on religious subjects. "One ill consequence," she says, "of my long trial is, that whereas I used to watch for occasions to introduce useful subjects, I am now backward to do it, from the apprehension that all I say may perhaps be called enthusiasm. Alas! it is a difficult case: I know not how to act; Lord direct me by thy Spirit." This difficulty she found to be greatly increased by the reluctance of Christians generally to converse on religious subjects; an evil far too prevalent in the present day, and ever to regretted, as one of the chief impediments of Christian piety. "The low tone of common conversation," she remarks, "I find to be very unfavourable to a spirit of devotion. I seize, however, what time I can to be alone, and that is the time I most truly enjoy. I do not become weary of reading books on the great subjects of religion, but of meditation and prayer I am too soon tired."

In the summer of this year, 1803, she repaired to Cheltenham, to drink the waters, which she found beneficial. On her return she thus describes the state of her mind: "However I may be as to bodily improvement, I fear my soul has not prospered in health. With fewer impediments than I have almost ever had; fewer trials, more leisure for read-

ing and meditation, I am not more spiritually minded. I read with little improvement, I fear, though I read much. Root out, O Lord, the spirit of worldiness from my heart. It flourishes there, because it finds a congenial soil."

In the course of her reading, some works on religious controversy came under her notice. The spirit which generally ran through these productions was most opposite to her feelings, and the comparatively unimportant matters, often made the subjects of dispute, relating as they frequently did more to the circumstantials than to the essentials of religion, was to her the cause of not a little regret. With genuine liberality of sentiment, she writes, "My soul is sick of religious controversy. How I hate the little narrowing names of Arminian and Calvinist! Christianity is a broad basis; Bible Christianity is what I love; a Christianity that does not insist on opinions indifferent in themselves; which is practical and pure; which teaches holiness, humility, repentance and faith in Christ, and which, after summing up all the graces, declares that the greatest of these is charity."

During the remaining months of 1803, we find Mrs. More cultivating the same grateful, resigned, devotional, and watchful spirit. Under accusations of disaffection to the government, when in fact she had done all in her power for its support, she calmly remarks, "Blessed be God, I heard the false accusations of my enemies with little emotion. O how thankful am I, that I can now hear such charges with patience! May I more and more learn of Him, who was meek and lowly. May I with humble reverence reflect that the Divine and perfect Redeemer was accused of sedition and stirring up the people. Under an apprehension that her thoughts were confined too exclusively to the improvement of her estate, she writes: "I find it easier to pray that

others may be weaned from the world, than to be freed from it myself. I have spent nearly all this week in my garden, too much occupied by amusement without doors and company within. I am now, through the mercy of my God, come to the conclusion of another month: great have been my mercies, great my undeservings."

After a season of vigilant self-inspection, she records, in a strain of deep self-abasement, her feelings. "While watching the vineyards of others, 'mine own vineyard have I not kept:' professing to have given up, in a great measure, the world, and to be careless of human opinion, have I not been too much elated at the high esteem publicly expressed for me by a highly distinguished individual?" Confined to her home by inclement weather, the last Sunday in November, she says: "I tried to improve the solitude: read some of the more serious parts of 'Baxter's Life,' and found them striking, and in some respects appropriate to my feelings. How far do I fall short of him! Fifty books were written against him, about twenty-three for and against me: he blessed God that none of these things disturbed him; I have to lament, that through my want of faith and piety, they had nearly destroyed my life." After reading a biographical sketch of a pious youth, she exclaims, "What resignation to the Divine will—what trust in Christ—what love to God under trials—what thankfulness for them, at the early age of nineteen! At three times that age, how cold, how dead, how slack am I, in preparation for that eternity which is so rapidly advancing."

In refutation of the charge so repeatedly made against Mrs. More, of disaffection to the government, the following instance of her patriotism ought not to pass unnoticed. The long-threatened invasion of England by France was, about this time, seriously apprehended; and it was thought not im-

probable that the attempt would be made at Uphall, distant from her residence only a few miles. Imagining that her estate was well situated for the commanding officers, she wrote to the proper authorities, generously offering them the use of it as long as it should be wanted, adding, that, if required, she would cheerfully give up part of her house for their use. "A kind letter of thanks," she says, "and friendly refusal for the present, but, of acceptance, in case of invasion, has satisfied our minds that we did right in making the offer." After the expense she had been at in improving the estate, this noble offer was no trifling sacrifice to make.

Towards the close of this year, some differences had arisen among some individuals with whom Mrs. More was on terms of intimacy: such was her love of peace, that she determined, if possible, though she was at the time much indisposed, to effect a reconciliation. "In the midst of my pain," she says, "I have secretly been trying to reconcile friends, whom trifles had set at variance. O what an imperfect world is this!—Good people quarrel for very nothings! For my own part, I feel so much inward sinfulness, that it makes me lenient to the faults of others: I say this with more truth, from having felt sinful tempers rise in my mind, to-day, about trifles: shall I not, then, who have a debt of a thousand talents to be forgiven, forgive my offending brother his hundred pence? May we bear one another's burdens; and may I prepare for that period of pain, weariness, and imbecility, which must come with increasing years." How invaluable, may we add, is a peaceable disposition: how well does the conduct of Mrs. More, in this instance especially, merit imitation:—how much of the bitterness of life would it remove! We see, daily, differences arise among Christian friends, about the merest trifles: offences taken, where no offence was intended, and a corres-

ponding coldness and shyness displayed between friends, who have always hitherto lived in harmony. Differences arise from some misapprehension, or more frequently from mere evil surmisings: we see the breach taking place, which, perhaps, may for ever separate chief friends, but which, by a little friendly council we might easily prevent; and, forgetting that the beginning of strife is as the letting out of water, we stand by, till it widens and becomes irreparable, insensible alike to the claims of friendship, and to the Redeemer's declaration, 'Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.'"

As Mrs. More concluded the old, so she commenced the new-year. Returning seasons and revolving years found her exercising over herself the same vigilant inspection, cultivating the same devotional, grateful, and hallowed feelings, and with increasing vigour, pressing after a spirit more entirely in subjection to the Divine will. On Sunday, January 1, 1804, she writes: "I am now, through the great and undeserved mercy of God, brought to the beginning of another year. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Give me grace, O Lord, on this day, solemnly and seriously to repent of the sins of my whole life, and especially of those committed during the past year. Touch my heart with a deep and lively sense of thy continued, renewed and increased mercies. Enable me this day to pass over in review these particular mercies,—the restoration in a great measure of my health and spirits, a continuance of personal and family comforts, misfortunes averted, opportunities of doing good, kindness of friends, ability to enjoy my sweet place continued, with an escape from the turbulent life of Bath, and with increased facilities for reading and retirement. Pour out, Lord, upon me and mine, the grace of thy Holy Spirit without measure.

Teach us to love thee with all our hearts, minds, and strength, and to devote the remainder of our lives to thy service.

These intense desires after increasing piety were followed by a corresponding degree of satisfaction. For though she often lamented her remaining imperfections, yet she had more self-control, and enjoyed many delightful seasons of intercourse with God. "Impatience," she says, "has always been one of my besetting evils, and it is still too ready to break out even on trifling occasions, but it is less so than it was." Let me be thankful that I have a comfortable evidence of growth in grace. I have lately heard of new enemies, and of the malignity of old ones with composure, and I trust, with submission to the Divine will. O that I may be entirely delivered from the fear of man, and the desire of human praise. My time for reading religious books has been much abridged of late, but I have in general kept up my hour of reflection at the close of the day, which I much enjoy, and labour to secure. If religion has lost ground in my heart lately, a day or two of indisposition will, I hope, restore it. This morning I had some comfortable intercourse with my Maker.

In a spirit of searching self-inspection she writes, a short time afterwards: "Though detained from church to-day by ill health, yet have I been awakened to more fervour in prayer than I have of late enjoyed. God grant that there may not be more of servile fear than of filial love in it. I have not loved thee, O Lord, as I ought, and hence have not served thee devotedly. I know not how much unbelief may be at the root of all this deadness." Under an apprehension that one of her schools would suffer materially from the death of an excellent clergyman, she submissively writes: "Lord, I come to thee, persuaded that all thy ways are per-

fect wisdom, and all thy dispensations perfect goodness."

The human mind is so constituted that it receives some impression, either beneficial or otherwise, from every variation of circumstance, in which it can be placed, however seemingly unimportant. Of this Mrs. More appears ever to have been conscious; and hence it was, that she at all times paid the most minute attention to its variations, not even omitting events which many would have thought undeserving notice. Alive to the importance of constantly keeping before the mind the solemn verities of the Christian faith, in order to the maintenance of lively and vigorous piety, she jealously guarded against whatever seemed likely to draw off her attention from the main object of her pursuit. "After a week of too much worldliness," she remarks, "my mind has somewhat recovered its tone, by earnest prayer during the night. I have this day endeavoured to check my own spirit by placing death before my eyes, and carefully reading the last chapter in Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress.' While I read, the impression is strong and my mind serious, but when the book is closed, the world rushes in and my heart grows cold. Yet I would hope that some worldly trials have given me less vexation this week; this, however, may be, not because my resignation is greater, but because my animal spirits are better."

In a world like the present, the scene of so much imperfection, it is almost impossible, even for the most circumspect to pass through life without being entangled in some occasional disagreements, either with or among those whom we love. Sudden and unlooked-for events will arise, that may occasionally originate diversity of opinion and of feeling, in the best regulated families. But where a Christian spirit predominates, they will soon cease to exist. Mrs. More, though she lived in great harmony and peace,

was not an entire stranger to events of this kind. "Some painful occurrences," she writes, "have happened this day. May we pity the errors, weaknesses, failings, and evil tempers of each other. Teach us, O Lord, to cultivate a spirit of Christian charity, and to bear with each other, especially as the days of age and imbecility advance." How entirely in accordance is this language with the genius of Christianity. Nothing gave Mrs. More greater pain than perpetuated strife. "No misunderstanding," she well remarks, "ought to subsist for a day among Christian friends. Life is too short, and peace too precious. We must bear one another's burdens. Christ bore all ours."

A long period had now elapsed, since Mrs. More had employed her pen in the production of any work for the press; and as her enemies had now been completely defeated, in their base intentions to injure her reputation, and had sunk into their merited contempt, many of her friends strongly urged her again to appear as the intrepid advocate of Christian piety. Mr. Wilberforce sent her a pressing invitation, to become a contributor to the 'Christian Observer:' her reply to his letter is characteristic of genuine humility, and illustrative of her feelings at the time. "I observe," she says, "attentively, all you say, about the importance of lending a little spirit and vigour to the periodical you mention: but, in order to give any thing, one must have it; and there is no affectation in my saying, I feel as if I should never be able again to write what any body will read. The soil, naturally meagre, is exhausted, and must lie fallow before another crop can be hoped for. But foolish metaphor apart, my nerves are far from being sufficiently strong for me to write. I have acquired such a dislike to it that I hesitate and procrastinate for days, when I have even a common letter to write. I used to defy mere pain and sick-

ness, and found little difference when anything was to be written, whether I was ill or well; but the late disorders of my body have introduced new disorders into my mind—listlessness and inapplication, two words of which before I hardly knew the meaning. It would grieve me sadly, if my want of power should make you unwilling to take it up. My inability should rather stimulate your zeal. I see how important it would be. I know what strength you gave to the first number by a striking essay. It is certainly a valuable miscellany, written in an excellent temper, sensible, judicious, and in general, candid, and moderate; but it wants a little essential salt, a little sprinkling of manners, as well as principles. Good people will like it as it is; but we do not, so much want books for good people, as books which will make bad people better. Do write without once thinking of such a pigmy associate as I should be."

In the spring of this year a circumstance occurred which again roused her into activity. His late Majesty, George the Third, and his royal consort, were both most anxious to adopt the best course of instruction that could be devised for the young princess Charlotte of Wales, the heir presumptive to the British throne. That illustrious individual was then at the age when some steps were requisite to be taken for her education; and it was a subject of deep national concern. Their majesties had both expressed to the Bishop of London their high approbation of Mrs. More's last work, and from their remarks to his lordship on the subject, in a conversation respecting the princess's education, he appears to have inferred that they would be pleased with a work from the same pen, on the subject of what system of education it would be most advisable to pursue with the young princess. The bishop, convinced that if he could but succeed in persuading Mrs. More to undertake the task, the result would

be successful, lost no time in submitting it to her consideration. At first she could hardly be persuaded to listen to it at all, chiefly on the ground of her imagined incapacity. At length, however, the entreaties of her friends overcame her reluctance, and she commenced the work, remarking with her accustomed modesty, "The idea has been suggested to me to write a pamphlet on the education of a certain royal personage. I am unequal to it, yet my friends assure me it is my duty to make the attempt. I feel reluctant, but no irksomeness in the task should prevent me, if I dared hope I should do any good. Lord, if it be fit that I should undertake it, do thou strengthen me for the work; fill me with holy boldness, with prudence and wisdom; and if I really set about it, let thy blessing, without which all is nothing, attend it."

The work thus undertaken kept her closely employed till the spring of 1805, when it was published in two volumes, modestly entitled 'Hints towards forming the Character of a young Princess.' As no tutor had been appointed for the royal pupil at the time she commenced this work, there is reason to think she had expectations, from the statements of some of her friends, that she was to have the honour to be selected for that important office. Whether such was ever the intention of their majesties, or whether it arose solely from the surmises of her friends, cannot be certainly known. She had evidently some expectation of it, for on learning, some months afterwards, that tutors were appointed, though she had composed the greater part of her work, she laid it aside, imagining it would be improper to thrust forward her views on the subject, after the task had been committed to other hands. And it was only at the earnest entreaty of her friends, that she could be induced to persevere till its completion. Profound secrecy was enjoined upon all those who knew she was the author, and the work appeared without her

name, handsomely and modestly inscribed to Dr. Fisher, bishop of Exeter, the appointed tutor to her royal highness. The dedication was highly complimentary, and well calculated to conciliate the bishop for any undue intrusion upon the duties of his office, or any imputations on his incapacity to discharge them aright, of which it might perhaps otherwise have been chargeable. The copy sent for his lordship's acceptance, he thus politely acknowledged: "Sir," (the bishop supposed the author to be a gentleman,) "I return you my best thanks for the very high degree of pleasure and satisfaction the perusal of your excellent performance, 'Hints for a Young Princess,' has given me. The world will soon, I am confident, be as anxious to know, as I am, to whom we are all indebted for so useful a work." In another letter, a short time afterwards, his lordship writes: "The bishop of Exeter has the pleasure to inform the author of 'Hints for a Young Princess,' that he has had the honour of presenting copies of that excellent work to the king and queen, and to the prince and princess of Wales. The queen has read the work and declared her approbation of it."

The work had an extensive sale, but Mrs. More did not long enjoy her concealment. All attentive readers of her former productions, declared it to be from her pen. The marks of internal evidence were too apparent to be overlooked--and so general was the opinion, that she soon found it inconvenient to withhold the avowal. It was received gratefully by the public, as a seasonable publication on a very important subject, and its merits were highly and most deservedly appreciated. Though designed principally for the royal pupil, it abounds with useful lessons of instruction for the young of all classes, but especially of those among the higher ranks. As a complete system of education, it was liable to exception. It would have been better had it been less po-

litical, and less voluminous. It was hastily, though certainly not negligently written ; some of the chapters might have been more judiciously distributed, and there are some instances of tautology, which would not, probably, have been allowed to remain, had she given it her careful revision. The modest title, however, which she selected, and the following explicit statement in the preface, of her intention in composing it, shows that it was not her design to draw out a complete course of study for the princess. "The writer," she remarks, "is very far indeed from pretending to offer anything approaching to a system of instruction for the royal pupil; much less from presuming to dictate a plan of conduct to the preceptor. What is here presented is a mere outline which may be filled up by far abler hands—a sketch which contains no consecutive details, which neither aspires to regularity of design, nor exactness of execution. To awaken a lively attention to a subject of such moment, to point out some circumstances connected with the early season of improvement, but still more with the subsequent stages of life; to offer, not a treatise on education, but a desultory suggestion of sentiments and principles; to convey instruction, not so much by precept or by argument, as to exemplify it by illustrations and examples; and above all, to stimulate the wise and the good to exertions far more effectual;—these are the real motives which have given birth to this slender performance." These objects, all of them important, Mrs. More's work was admirably adapted to accomplish.

But the distinguishing excellence of these volumes consists in their decided reference to Christian principles. The author never allows the reader to forget, that of all subjects, religion is the most important; and that Christianity is the only basis of real religion. Setting out with the important statement, that self-denial and self-command, two essential branches of

piety, are invariably more difficult in proportion as individuals are less under the restraint of others, and have less check put upon their desires, she shows that princes stand more in need of the controlling influence of religion than any others. "The first habits to be formed," she well remarks, "in every human being, and still more in the offspring and heir of royalty, is that of patience, and even cheerfulness under postponed and restricted gratifications. And the first lesson to be taught is, that since self-command is so essential to all genuine virtue and real happiness, where others cannot restrain us, there especially we should restrain ourselves. That illustrious monarch, Gustavus Adolphus, justly called the Great King of Sweden, was so sensible of this, that when he was surprised by one of his officers, in secret prayer in his tent, he said, 'Persons of my rank are responsible to God alone for their actions.' This gives the enemy of mankind a peculiar advantage over us; an advantage which can only be resisted by prayer, and reading the Scriptures."

Our limits will not allow us even briefly to glance at all the subjects treated of in this excellent work; but we cannot forbear to notice a few of the more important chapters: some excellent remarks are made on the acquisition of knowledge, illustrative of Mrs. More's very accurate and extensive information. The chapter on forming the mind, well deserves an attentive perusal. After stating that the royal pupil is to be reminded that she is not to study that she may become learned, but that she may become wise, the author thus proceeds: "but above all, there should be a constant, yet imperceptible habit, of turning the mind to a love of the TRUTH in all its forms and aspects, not only in matters of grave morality, but in matters of business, of common intercourse, and even of taste; for there is a truth, both in moral and mental taste, little short of the

exactness of mathematical truth; and the mind should acquire the habit of seeking perfection in every thing. When it is considered how short the period of life is, in which plain, unvarnished truth, will be likely to appear in all its native simplicity, before princes, is there a moment of that happy, that auspicious season to be lost, for presenting it to them in all its lovely and engaging forms? It is not enough that they should possess truth as a principle, they should cherish it as an object of affection; delight in it as a matter of taste, and dread nothing so much as false colouring and artifice."

In the chapter on Christianity, one of the best in the work, Mrs. More states the nature of that religion she wished to be taught the young princess. "In forming the mind of the royal pupil," she remarks, "an early introduction to the Scriptures will doubtless be considered as a matter of prime concern: and as her mind opens, it will be thought necessary to point out to her how one great event led to another still greater, till at length we see a series accomplished, and an immoveable foundation laid for our faith and hope: and as the heart must be the seat of that which is to influence the conduct, she will be reminded that it is chiefly to the heart that the sacred writers address themselves: their object is to make us love what is right, rather than to occupy our understandings with theory. St. Paul, whose peculiar province it seems to have been to explain, as it were, scientifically, the great doctrines of his Master, gives us a definition of Christianity, which outdoes at once, in brevity, in fulness, and even in systematic exactness, all that has been achieved in the art of epitomizing. It is, 'Faith which worketh by love.' In his language, faith is not a notion of the intellect only, nor a tradition, coldly residing in the recollection, but an actual persuasion of the divine realities; it is, in short,

such a conviction of what is revealed, as will give it an efficacy for every practical purpose, equal to that which is derived through the evidence of our senses. Faith is religion, in its simplest inward principle; it is the deep, efficacious impression, which the manifestation of God made to us in the Scripture ought to produce on our hearts, but which it does not produce until in answer to our earnest prayer, the Holy Spirit opens our hearts to receive the things thus presented to our minds. When the unseen realities are able to do more with us than the tempting objects of this visible world, then, and not before, is faith really formed within us."

"Let, then," continues Mrs. More, "the royal pupil be taught, (and we insert it, because it is a lesson which all ought to learn,) that Christianity is not to be examined, nor the sacred Scriptures perused, as if they were merely to be believed, and remembered, and held in speculative reverence: but let it rather be impressed upon her, that the holy Scriptures are God's great means of producing in her heart that awe of his presence, that reverence of his majesty, that delight in his infinite perfections, that practical affectionate knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he has sent, which constitutes the rest, the peace, the strength, the light, the consolation of every soul which attains it. Let her be taught to regard the oracles of God, not merely as a light to guide her steps, but as a sacred fire, to animate and invigorate her soul; a purifying flame, like that upon the altar whence the seraph conveyed the coal to the lips of the prophet, who cried out, 'Lo, this hath touched my lips, and mine iniquity is taken away, and my sin is purged.' The Scriptures, to be read effectually, must be read devoutly; with earnest and constant prayer to Him, whose word it is, that he would so impress it on our hearts by his good Spirit, that it may become the

power of God to our salvation. 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.' But, one grand peculiarity of Christianity remains to be noticed; that it addresses us not merely as ignorant, but as corrupt, needing not merely instruction, but renovation. This can only be accomplished by Divine power: it is a new creation of the soul, requiring the hand of the Divine artificer to produce it, no less than in its original formation. No instruction can be more indispensable for the royal pupil, than that which tends to impress on her mind, that, in this respect, she stands on a level with all mankind; that, owing to the natural corruption of the human heart, whatever amiable qualities an individual may possess, each carries about with him a root of bitterness, which, if not counteracted, will spread itself through the whole soul, disfigure the character, and disorder the life: that this malignant principle, while predominant, will admit but of a shadowy, delusive semblance of virtue, which the least temptation will dissipate, and from which the heart can never receive solid comfort. Who can enumerate the hourly calamities which the proud, the self-willed, or the voluptuous, are inflicting on themselves, lacerating and rending their bosoms, while no eye perceives it? Who can express the daily disappointment, the alternate fever and lassitude of him whose heart knows of no rest, except what this disordered world can afford? Who, then, is happy? He, alone, whether prince or subject, who, through the powerful and salutary influence of revealed religion on his heart, is so impressed with things invisible, as to rise superior to the vicissitudes of mortality, who so believes and feels what is contained in the Bible, as to make God his refuge, the Saviour his trust, and true practical holiness the chief object of his pursuit."

CHAPTER XIV.

Visits several Friends—Correspondence with Alexander Knox—Alarming attack of Illness—Recovery—State of her mind—Commences writing 'Cœlebs'—Design of the work—Its rapid and extensive sale—Brief sketch of its contents—Testimonials to its merits—Letter to a Catholic priest—Composition of 'Practical Piety'—Its publication—Remarks on its Contents.

The summer and autumn of 1805 Mrs. More spent chiefly in visits to her friends. With the families of Bishop Porteus, Lord Teignmouth, Mr. Thornton, and Mr. Wilberforce, she passed several weeks delightfully. Severely as her feelings had been hurt by her late persecution, it had not been without its advantages to her in other respects. Many excellent and talented individuals, who had only known her previously by her writings, fully satisfied that the accusations of her opponents were most malicious and false, now felt anxious to give her proofs of their high regard. This led considerably to the increase of her correspondents; among the most distinguished of whom was the late pious, acute, and eloquent Alexander Knox, with whom she interchanged some most interesting letters.

To this gentleman, who appears to have suspected that she had embraced the Calvinistic theology, she thus writes: "I will not attempt to answer some of your observations on my having extolled

so much the doctrines of the Church, because I confess I do not quite understand what you mean. I take it for granted that you imagined I meant the *Articles*, about which, not being a clergyman, I really little concern myself, whereas, if I understand myself, (which, perhaps, I do not always,) I was thinking only of the doctrines as they are exhibited in the Liturgy, about which I think we have but one opinion. I was even so unwilling to dwell on the Articles, that it led me to omit part of what you had suggested; and if I do not mistake, there are not more than half-a-dozen lines which relate to them. I never talk or write of doctrines as a party matter, because it tends to make our tempers sour, and is always unprofitable. The doctrines peculiar to Calvinism I do not adopt, though I much reverence many good men who maintain them. These differences I conceive to be permitted for the exercise of mutual charity."

The distinction here made between the Articles and the doctrines of the Church, would seem to imply a want of consistency in them, the existence of which it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prove. Theologians, both Calvinistic and Arminian, have contended with equal pertinacity, if not with equal ingenuity, that they contain nothing that will not harmonize with their received opinions. But no individual, who has candidly and carefully compared them, will admit that there is any dissonance between the Liturgy and the Articles; one speaks the language of devotion, the other of assertion; in one the heart is chiefly engaged, in the other the mind. Nor do we imagine that Mrs. More thought otherwise, notwithstanding her statements in the above extract. Her reasons for declining controversy, because it tends to embitter the temper, and is *unprofitable*, well deserves the attentive notice and constant imitation of all.

In October, 1805, Mrs. More suffered a short, but severe attack of illness. On regaining her health, she spent a short time with her favourite, Bishop Porteus, at Fulham. Returning to Barley Wood, she took a most active part in the management of the schools, chiefly to supply the place of her sister Martha, who was too unwell to pursue her usual labours. She continued thus closely engaged during the winter, and till near the close of the spring of 1806, when she was seized with an alarming illness, brought on, apparently, by imprudently exposing herself to the damp air, after attending one of her evening meetings. For some weeks her life was in imminent danger. Every means which the most skilful physicians could devise were employed, and for a considerable time her case seemed entirely hopeless. At length favourable symptoms began to appear, and she gradually recovered her health, but so slowly, that it was nearly two years before it was re-established.

The very severe remedies it had been found necessary to employ to effect her restoration, led her friends to apprehend that she would never fully regain her mental powers. How strong is the tendency in man, in the hour of trouble, to augment his anguish, by imagining results which may never happen! So it was in this case: Mrs. More, with her returning health, recovered the tone of her mind, with undiminished, if not with increasing vigour.

Affliction is a time of trial; it puts to the test, especially where it happens to be critical and dangerous, the principles we have embraced. Under it, the mind has often a more vivid perception of things unseen, than it can have in health. The soul feels a conscious nearness to the borders of the invisible world. And when an intelligent, active Christian recovers from an alarming illness, it is interesting to know what support his religion afforded

him under the trial. The testimony of one who has passed through a season of dangerous and severe suffering, to the reality and power of religion, is worth possessing. Happily for the cause of piety, it has been borne in unnumbered instances; and Mrs. More thus bears it, in one of her earliest letters after her recovery. Writing to Mr. Pepys she remarks: "From no part of your kind letter did I derive such heartfelt satisfaction, as from the evidence it afforded me of the pious feelings of your heart, and your devout recognition of the merciful hand whence your multiplied blessings flow. O my good friend, there is no other foundation for solid comfort, but the Christian religion; not barely acknowledged as a truth, from the conviction of external evidence, (strong and important as that is,) but embraced as a principle of hope, and joy, and peace, and felt, in its suitableness to the wants and necessities of our nature, as well as in its power to alleviate, and even to sanctify our sorrows. Little as has been my progress in this, yet that little was an unspeakable support to me on the bed of sickness. In my weak and helpless state, I have often thought, what would have become of me, if I had then had to commence learning the elements of religion."

She had corresponded with Sir William some years before, on literary subjects; but she seems not to have been aware, that like herself, though not perhaps to an equal degree, he had been led to see the emptiness of the world, and the value of religion. How much pleasure must it have afforded her, to have had the sentiments she had conveyed to her talented correspondent, thus responded to by his classic pen: "The day is not long enough for what I find to do, now that I am supposed to do nothing; and if I can but employ the remainder of my time, so as to be able to render a good account of it hereafter, I have no apprehension of not passing it to my

own satisfaction, while it shall please God to continue my health. 'Thou upholdest me in health,' are the words in which I daily acknowledge my dependence on God's goodness for the continuance of it; and I humbly hope, as I do not trust in my own strength, but look up to him with the deepest sense of gratitude for all his mercies, that they will be continued to me. But when I hear of such disasters as the loss of Lord Royston, I rejoice, with trembling, and ask myself, How would it have been possible for me to have borne the stroke? Indeed, my good friend, I am thoroughly sensible that if religion is so necessary to keep us temperate in prosperity, it is our only support in adversity. I can safely say, that the most delightful moments of my life have been those in which I have raised my heart towards Heaven, in thankfulness for the innumerable blessings which I have enjoyed. If devotion be, therefore, my greatest delight in the time of health, what other comfort can I look to in the time of tribulation and in the hour of death? How strangely unacquainted with the delights of religion are those who consider it only as a system of hard duties to be performed, which afford here nothing but labour and sorrow, though hereafter they may be attended with their reward. I am persuaded, on the contrary, that, as Bishop Horne says beautifully, on our Saviour's caution against too great anxiety for the morrow, that he has consulted, in his precepts, our happiness here as well as hereafter."

The attestation thus borne, in the confidential intimacy of Christian friendship, by two such minds as Mrs. More's and her correspondent's, to the power of our holy religion in supporting the soul under all the ills of human life, yielding to it, at the same time, a source of comfort in the prospect of a future world, shows that a well-grounded Christian hope rests not on a cunningly devised fable, the mere in-

vention of men, but on the rock of sacred, immutable truth.

In the early part of this year, (1808,) Mrs. More had commenced a work of fiction, subsequently published under the catching, but not inappropriate title of 'Cœlebs in search of a Wife.' It originated in a desire which her ever-active mind felt, to convert the time consumed in paying and receiving visits, which is often entirely lost, to some useful purpose. Only mere hints were at first put down, as they incidentally occurred. These were afterwards worked up, as leisure and opportunity offered. She had made considerable progress by the spring of 1809, when the death of Bishop Porteus rendered her, for a time, unable to proceed. This event did not come wholly unexpected; the bishop's health had been for many months gradually declining, and on a visit his lordship paid her at Barley Wood, a few weeks previous to his decease, she saw many painful proofs of that approaching event; yet such was the high regard in which she held his character, that she felt his removal most acutely. It afforded her pleasure to observe that his end was peace. To Mrs. Kennicott, who was with the bishop at the time, and had informed her of the sad event, she writes: "Your heart-breaking, and yet heart-rejoicing letter, was sent after me into Gloucestershire; but as we were upon the move, I had neither time nor composure to answer it: indeed, after reading it once, I was obliged to put it away for several days before I could acquire fortitude to read it again. Most heartily do I praise God for the easy and peaceful departure of our ever-to-be-lamented bishop: his life had been long and prosperous, happy and useful, far beyond the common lot: full of days, of honours, and of virtues, his death was without a pang, and he may literally be said to have fallen asleep. It gives me solid plea-

sure to reflect, that, considering his frequent interruptions from company and business, his mind retained much spirituality." As a token of respect, the bishop bequeathed to Mrs. More one hundred pounds, and she erected, to his memory, in the plantation at Barley Wood, an urn, on which was inscribed:—

"TO BEILBY PORTEUS, LATE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON,
IN MEMORY OF
LONG AND FAITHFUL FRIENDSHIP."

Mrs. More now resumed the composition of her 'Cœlebs,' and the work was published anonymously in two volumes octavo, on the 1st of December, 1809. The preface was written as if it were the production of a gentleman, and purported briefly to state the origin and design of the work. The first edition was sold off in a fortnight, and so extraordinary was the demand for it, that the twelfth edition was published before the end of twelve months; and the portion of profits allotted her by the publishers, amounted then to two thousand pounds. The attempt to conceal her name proved in this instance more successful than in any other. A few of her friends could discover, by the style and other internal evidence, that it was from her pen; but the public had no conception to whom they were indebted for the fund of information and entertainment the volumes contained: considerable discussion and diversity of opinion prevailed on the subjects. "Junius's Letters," says one of her correspondents, "or Chatterton's Poems, hardly occasioned more curious research, or more eager controversy, in the public, than 'Cœlebs' soon did in private; at least to a certain extent." The secret was kept till it had passed through several editions, when she wisely thought it better, to end all disputes respecting its author, to acknowledge the production.

The design of this work was, through the medium

of fiction, to show that religion might fairly be brought to mix with the concerns of ordinary life, without at all impairing its activity, or lessening its cheerfulness. This object was successfully accomplished to a wider extent than perhaps it could have been, had the fictitious vehicle not been employed. Important lessons on all domestic subjects, on intellectual attainments, and especially on religion and morals, are here incidentally brought before the reader's attention so vividly, and in a form so striking and powerful, that they can hardly fail to arrest his attention. Whatever may be said against attempts to convey religious truths by narratives not founded on facts, (and it is certainly not without its disadvantages,) yet the consideration that vast numbers can never be persuaded to peruse works of a different cast, is at least a powerful argument in their favour.

The incidents of the fiction are not improbable; the characters introduced are well sustained, but less numerous than might have been expected. The style is animated and pleasing, with fewer inaccuracies than in any of Mrs. More's former works, owing probably to her having composed it with less haste; and the plan is simple. A young gentleman is represented as being descended from a pious and opulent family, who, on leaving the University, is shortly afterwards bereft of his excellent father. The maternal solicitude of his surviving parent, prompts her to give him some judicious advice respecting the choice of a wife. This lady is made thus to advise her son. "From the rectitude of your principles, I am not much afraid, Charles, of your being misled by the captivating exterior of any woman, who is greatly deficient either in sense or conduct; but remember, my son, that there are many women against whose character there lies nothing very objectionable, who are yet little calculated to taste or to communicate rational happiness.

Do not indulge romantic ideas of superhuman excellence. Remember that the fairest creature is a fallen creature. Yet let not your standard be low. If it be absurd to expect perfection, it is not unreasonable to look for consistency. Do not suffer yourself to be caught by a shining quality, till you know it is not counteracted by the opposite defect. Be not taken in by strictness in one point, till you are assured there is no laxity in others. In character, as in architecture, proportion is beauty. The education of the present race of females is not very favourable to domestic happiness: for my own part I call education not that which smothers a woman with accomplishments, but that which tends to consolidate a firm and regular system of character; that which tends to form a friend, a companion and a wife. I call education not that which is made up of shreds and patches of useless sorts, but that which inculcates principles, polishes taste, regulates temper, cultivates reason, subdues the passions, directs the feelings, habituates to reflection, trains to self-denial, and more especially that which refers all actions, feelings, sentiments, tastes and passions, to the love and fear of God."

The son is soon bereft of the excellent mother who gives him this wise counsel, and feeling much the want of a suitable partner, forms a journey to London, and visits successively many highly respectable families, with whom his father was formerly intimate. On setting out, he remarks: "My motive for performing this intended journey is, that I might select a deserving *companion* for life. In such a companion, I said to myself, as I drove along in my post-chaise, I do not want a Helen, a Saint Cecilia, or a Madame Doucier. Yet she must be elegant, or I should not love her; sensible, or I could not respect her; prudent, or I could not confide in her; well-informed, or she

could not educate my children; well-bred, or she could not entertain my friends; consistent, or I should offend the shade of my mother; pious, or I should not be happy with her, because the prime comfort in a companion for life, is the delightful hope that she will be a companion for eternity."

Cœlebs now passes a few days in different families, and is made to sketch the follies and vices of many well-meaning individuals, in a manner that evinces a perfect knowledge of the human heart, and of the prevalent inconsistencies of mankind. The folly of allowing children to make an appearance beyond what is suitable to their station in life; the evils of teaching them accomplishments only; the danger of permitting them to waste their time in the pursuit of mere trifles; and the absurdity of neglecting to instruct them in the principles, and to initiate them into the practices of Christian piety, on the ground that it is the prerogative of God only to change the heart, are most forcibly exhibited. The evils of teaching young ladies domestic duties only, limiting their knowledge within the range of the most approved methods of cookery, neglecting entirely to cultivate their minds, and to improve their tastes, or of going to the opposite extreme, teaching them accomplishments only, thus making them mere musicians or painters, are clearly pointed out and severely censured. The pernicious results of parents entirely prohibiting their children, in their opening years, from contributing by their remarks to enliven the family or social circle, are happily exposed. Nothing can exceed the severity with which the practice of receiving into respectable families the libertine, who is known to have degraded and ruined (perhaps for ever) some unsuspecting female, while his unhappy, but less guilty associate is carefully shunned, is censured.

But to notice, even the most briefly, all the incon-

sistencies, and vices exposed, and censured in this work, would carry us far beyond our limits. After passing through a variety of scenes, Cœlebs at length arrives at Mr. Stanley's, the gentleman whom his father, previous to his death, had particularly enjoined him to consult in this delicate affair, before he finally gave his hand to any one. He found the Stanleys a most kind and affectionate family: Mr. and Mrs. Stanley were wise, judicious, and pious. Their children were educated on Christian principles. After remaining with them a short time, he forms an attachment to their eldest daughter, obtains her consent, and that of her parents to their union, which turns out in the sequel to have been in accordance with the wishes of his late father, between whom and Mr. Stanley a correspondence had been carried on for some years respecting it, though unknown either to him or to the young lady. The tale closes rather abruptly. Its transitions are some of them unnatural, and too slightly connected with the narration; but all is interesting, and it is impossible to read it without benefit. In some parts it is exquisitely tender and touching, everywhere it is instructing. Almost the only fault in the style is, that it is too often antithetical.

The popularity of this work, great as it was, did not exempt it from some severe attacks. A celebrated Roman catholic priest wrote Mrs. More a letter, animadverting, with much bitterness, on a brief passage, which he thought, by implication, censured with great asperity every member of that community. In her reply, she remarks, with equal firmness and Christian candour: "Reverend sir, it has been my lot to be frequently attacked. It has been my practice never to defend myself. I should not now have troubled you with an answer, did I not feel it necessary to correct the misapprehension on which you ground your resentment. The meaning you attach

to the sentence of which you complain, differs entirely from the sentiment I intended to convey. I am ready to confess that the latter part of the sentence is not sufficiently guarded; this I shall obviate in future. Allow me to state, that in this plain letter I neither intend compliment, nor controversy: I honour good men, whatever be their religious persuasions; but I honour their virtues, without adopting, what appears to me to be, their errors. I am too zealous in my own faith, not to admire zeal in the opposite party. I can pity that want of charity in you of which I am so mercilessly accused by you; though I doubt not your intention is as pure as your language is acrimonious. I have no motive, in this brief answer, but to express my concern if I have offended against Christian charity; and to ask your pardon, if I have unintentionally offended a man of piety and learning. On cool reflection, I think you will not be altogether satisfied with the harshness of your letter." This drew a reply from the priest, but as he justified himself in all his former aspersions, Mrs. More declined the correspondence.

But 'Cœlebs' was assailed with great severity, publicly as well as privately, by an individual, too, from whom a very different treatment might have been expected. Still, Mrs. More maintained a dignified silence. In a letter to a friend, who had referred her to some controversy carried on at that time in the Exeter Guardian, we discover the principles of Christian forbearance and moderation by which she was actuated. "I take no delight in controversy. To see others angry has such a tendency to make me angry, that I am afraid of getting my temper soured, and my heart hardened, by dwelling much, on what even good people say against each other. It will be the glory of a future state, that the passions and prejudices, and different views, which alienated good men from each other on earth, will

all be done away, and perfect love and harmony be the consequence of perfect light and knowledge. Perhaps my own worthless self, having been so frequently the object of attack, has been of use to me in my judgment of others. It has certainly been of use to myself, in advancing the tranquillity and acquiescence of my own mind, under almost every species of assault. I have never written, and by the grace of God, I never will write, one line in my own vindication; though Mr. Cumberland, in his last review, warns the bishop against 'Cœlebs,' as a book which is intended to overturn the Church; that the deepest mischief lurks in every page; and that, as it is in every body's hands, he feels it his duty to say, *Caveat Emptor.* My dear sir, shall I not pity the poor man, on the borders of fourscore, who could write such a criticism, after having composed a poem entitled 'Calvary.' Alas, for poor human nature! that he has not forgiven, at the end of thirty years, that in my gay and youthful days, a tragedy of mine was preferred to one of his, which, perhaps, better deserved success."

But the truth is, that though Mrs. More felt a laudable degree of anxiety respecting her literary reputation, it was, in her estimation, as nothing, compared with her own advancement in piety, and her usefulness as a writer. Alluding to the above criticisms, she writes, in reply to an interesting account she had received of the success of religion, "With what delight do I turn from these petty grievances, to the information you give me, of the flourishing state of religion in your neighbourhood: this is, indeed, a cause of thankfulness. Pray for me, my dear sir, that I may be more detached from the world, more spiritually-minded, less engrossed by the things of time and sense, which my judgment despises, but, which absorb too much of those affections which are due only to eternal things. What un-

speakable consolation is it, that I have a better righteousness than my own to trust to! May I trust to it more entirely, for I am sure there is no other trust."

To learn that any of her works had been the means of promoting the advancement of piety, afforded Mrs. More a far higher gratification, than the acquisition of literary fame, come whence it might. She was not a mere literary adventurer, anxious only to produce works that would please and sell: her chief object was to convey that information to the reader which should have a special decided reference to his highest interests: she sought, indeed, to do this in a form the most unobjectionable and fascinating; but she was careful to make the sentiment, and not the style, the chief object of her attention: hence it gave her real pleasure to receive from the Rev. J. Venn the following account of the happy results of her labours. After an interesting detail of the usefulness of one of her tracts, he writes: "I am also happy to inform you, that 'Cœlebs' is equally beneficial in the higher circles. The aunt of a lady in the neighbourhood, whose excellent niece suffered much restraint and hardship, in consequence of her seriousness, is now, from having read 'Cœlebs,' no longer prejudiced; but she now reads the books which her niece recommends. I have heard, also, of another lady, near this place, who has received similar benefit. These instances have occurred just by, but I have been informed of many more at a distance, where still more beneficial effects have been produced. Now that the idle clamours against the work have been silenced, you may expect to receive, even here, a recompense for your sufferings in this respect: for my own part, I look upon it as one of the most useful works which was ever written, for the purpose it was intended to answer."

Many other testimonies, equally satisfactory, of

the benefits which had been the result of her literary labours, Mrs. More had the pleasure to receive: most of these were accompanied with pressing entreaties, that she would, if health and leisure permitted, favour the world with some other productions: but the delicate state of her health, and its frequent interruptions, together with the numerous visitors that were almost constantly at Barley Wood, rendered this a matter of extreme difficulty. The pleasure of receiving visits from our friends, even the dearest, is not always an equivalent for the serious loss of time often occasioned thereby. Of this Mrs. More was often painfully sensible: yet, amidst all her interruptions, and though, as she remarks, she received at that time twice the number, both of letters and guests, that she had received any former year, yet she commenced, in the autumn of 1810, the composition of her 'Practical Piety, or the Influence of the Religion of the Heart on the Practice of Life." This work was published in two volumes, in the spring of 1811, as her acknowledged production: the first edition was sold while it was in the press, and it soon ran through eight editions.

The subjects selected for the employment of her pen, show that her mind was becoming more decidedly pious. In the preface, she thus modestly accounts for writing so frequently on the subject of religion. "An eminent professor of our own time, modestly declared, that he taught chemistry in order that he might learn it: the writer of the following pages might offer, with far more justice, a similar declaration, as an apology for so frequently treating on the important topics of religion and morals. Abashed by the equitable precept,—

"Let those teach others, who themselves excel,"

she is aware how fully she is putting it in the power of the reader, to ask, in the searching words, of an

eminent prelate, 'They that speak thus, and advise thus, do they act thus?' She can defend herself in no other way, than by adopting for a reply the words of the same venerable divine; 'O that it were not too true.' Yet, if but little be attained, the very aim is right, and something is done by it: it is better to have such thoughts, than altogether to give them up: yea, even the very desire, if it be serious and sincere, may so powerfully change the habitude of the soul, as not to be despised." With what solemnity of mind she entered upon this work, and what was her predominant feeling while composing it, the following very serious remarks, made towards the close of the preface, will show. "The writer has endeavoured to address herself, as a Christian, who must die soon, to Christians, who must die, certainly: she trusts not to be accused of erecting herself into a censor, but as one who writes with a real consciousness, that she is far from having reached the attainments she suggests; and with a heartfelt conviction of the danger of holding out a standard too likely to discredit her own practice. She writes, not with the assumption of superiority, but with a deep practical sense of the infirmities against which she has presumed to caution others: she wishes to be understood, as speaking the language of sympathy, rather than of dictation; of feeling, rather than of document. So far from fancying herself exempt from the evils on which she has animadverted, her very feeling of these evils has assisted her in their delineation: thus this interior sentiment of her own deficiencies, which might be urged as a disqualification, has, she trusts, enabled her to point out dangers to others. If the patient cannot lay down rules for the cure of a reigning disease, yet he may treat the case feelingly, if not scientifically: he may substitute experience in default of skill: he may insist on the value of the remedy he has neglected, as

well as recommend that from which he has found benefit."

In a work like this, in which the great leading facts of the Christian system form the prominent topics of discussion, it was hardly possible to avoid controversy. Yet, as she tells us in the preface, she avoided, as far as Christian sincerity would permit, all controverted subjects, carefully shunning whatever might lead to disputation rather than to profit. She was herself, however, aware, as she well expresses it, that religion has her parties, as well as politics, and those who endeavour to steer clear of all extremes in either, are often in danger of being misrepresented by both. "In this case," she says, "the author is apprehensive that she may be censured by opposite classes of readers, as being too strict and too relaxed—too much attached to opinions, and too indifferent about them—as having narrowed the broad field of Christianity by labouring to establish its peculiar doctrines—as having broken down its enclosures by not confining herself to doctrines exclusively—as having considered morality of too little importance—as having raised it to an undue elevation—as having made practice everything—as having made it nothing." But her anxiety to avoid controversy did not induce her to adopt that spurious liberality which sacrifices piety to false candour. "Christianity," she says, "may be said to suffer between two criminals, but it is difficult to determine by which she suffers most; whether by that uncharitable bigotry which disguises her divine character, and speculatively adopts the flames of inquisitorial intolerance, or by that indiscriminate candour which, by stripping her of her appropriate attributes, reduces her to something scarcely worth contending for; to something which, instead of making her the religion of Christ, generalizes her into any religion which may choose to adopt her. The

one distorts her lovely lineaments into caricature, and throws her graceful figure into gloomy shadow; the other, by daubing her over with colours not her own, renders her form indistinct, and obliterates her features. In the first instance she excites little affection, in the latter she is not recognized."

If the features of an author's mind may be correctly inferred from the nature of his works, (and nothing can be a juster criterion,) it will then clearly appear that Mrs. More was at this time seeking the attainment of piety the most consistent and elevated. She was most careful not to raise the standard of Christian attainment above, nor to sink it below, the unerring rule set in the Scriptures. She saw clearly, as she well expresses it, that Christianity, though it is the most perfect rule of life that was ever devised, is far from being barely a rule of life; that a religion consisting of a mere code of laws, might have sufficed for men in a state of innocence, but man having broken these laws, cannot be saved by a rule which he has violated. The chief object of the gospel is not to furnish rules for the preservation of innocence, but to hold out the means of salvation to the guilty. It does not proceed upon supposition, but a fact; not upon what might have suited man in a state of purity, but upon what is suitable to him in the exigencies of his fallen condition. Christianity does not consist in external conformity to practices which, though right in themselves, may be adopted from human motives, to answer secular purposes. It is not a religion of forms, and modes, and decencies. It is a being transformed into the image of God. It is a being like-minded with Christ. It is endeavouring to live to him here, that we may live with him hereafter. It is desiring earnestly to surrender our will to his, our heart to the conduct of his Spirit, our life to the guidance of his word.

But the attainment of this religion Mrs. More did

not seek herself, nor did she direct others to seek, by the unassisted aid of human effort. In this work especially, she took care to lay a Scriptural foundation. "The mistake," she well remarks, "of many persons in religion, appears to be that they do not begin with the beginning. They do not lay their foundation in the persuasion that man is by nature in a state of alienation from God. They consider him rather as an imperfect than as a fallen creature; they allow that he requires to be improved, but deny that he requires a thorough renovation of heart. But genuine Christianity can never be engrafted on any other stock than the apostacy of man. The design to reinstate beings who have not fallen; to propose a restoration where there was not a previous loss, a cure where there was not a disease, is an incongruity too palpable to require confutation, did we not frequently see the doctrine of redemption maintained by those who deny that man was in a state to require it. But would Christ have been sent to preach deliverance to the captive had there been no captivity? would he have been appointed to open the prison to them that were bound had man not been in bondage?"

Ever keeping in mind the depravity of the human heart and the consequent disinclination of men to love and fear God, Mrs. More contends scripturally for the necessity of that great change in the mind and the heart which, as she says, "is expressed in great varieties of language and under different figures of speech, in the volume of inspiration, and which can only be effected by the operation of the Divine Spirit. By this operation," she strikingly remarks, "the affections and faculties receive a new impulse—man's dark understanding is illuminated; his rebellious will is subdued; his irregular desires are rectified; his judgment is informed; his imagination is chastened; his inclinations are sanctified;

his hopes and fears are directed to their true and adequate end. Heaven becomes the object of his hopes, and eternal separation from God the object of his fears. His love of the world is transmuted into the love of God; the lower faculties are pressed into this new service; the senses have a higher direction; the whole internal constitution receives a nobler bent, the intents and purposes of the mind a sublimer aim; his aspirations a loftier flight—his vacillating desires find a fixed object—his vagrant purposes a settled home—his disappointed heart a certain refuge."

The great Agent by whom alone this moral change can be produced, Mrs. More shows to be the Divine Spirit. But lest any should suppose, as she was well persuaded many had done, that because it was God alone that could accomplish it, they were under no obligation to seek it, but might neglect it with impunity, as a work with which they were not concerned, she successfully shows that, great as the difficulty may be to renew the heart, and utterly unable as we may be to effect it ourselves, yet, as the power to effect it is ever within our reach, it is as much our duty to seek after it as if it could be done by our own efforts. "We complain," she says, "of our own weakness, and plead our inability to serve God in the way we ought, which we may do very justly. But this infirmity God knows far more exactly than we know it; yet he knows, that with the help which he offers us, we can both love and obey him, or he never would have said, 'Give me thy heart—seek ye my face—add to your faith virtue—be renewed in the spirit of your mind—keep yourselves in the love of God—strengthen the things which remain;'—precepts which have no definite meaning, had the duties been impracticable. Can we suppose that the omniscient God would have given these commands to powerless, incapable, unimpressible beings? Can

we suppose that he would command paralyzed creatures to walk, and then condemn them for not being able to move? He knows, it is true, our natural impotence; but he knows, because he confers, our superinduced strength."

Our limits forbid us to notice this work further in detail, except it be to offer a few general remarks upon it; and so well is it known, that perhaps this is all that is requisite. It is divided into chapters, though almost every chapter is on a separate subject, and is but slightly connected with the preceding one. They resemble detached essays more than a series of connected chapters; yet there is a harmony of sentiment, and an excellent spirit running through them all. They are admirably suited for family reading; and as the chapters are not long, may occasionally be read instead of a sermon or a lecture, with much advantage. The subjects discussed are all important; and though many of them are commonplace, yet an air of novelty is thrown around them, by the interesting manner in which they are illustrated. The style is animated, and often striking; though it is sometimes diffuse and declamatory, and there are passages which might have been greatly improved by a careful revision. The figures are beautiful, and happily chosen: the sentiments are purely evangelical; the appeals to the heart are powerfully awakening; the motives for persevering in a course of piety are all scriptural, well-selected, and forcibly applied. No one could read the work without deriving from it much benefit. To the Christian mourner, struggling with difficulties which he feels unable to surmount, many of the chapters are peculiarly adapted.

In the chapter on the Love of God, the folly of not implicitly putting our confidence in the Almighty is thus exposed: "Incidents and occasions every day arise, which not only call on us to

trust in God, but which furnish us with suitable occasions of vindicating, if I may presume to use the expression, the character and conduct of the Almighty in the government of human affairs. Yet there is no duty which we perform less readily. If we hear a friend accused of any act of injustice, we resent the injury offered to his character on the ground of his general conduct, inferring, from the numerous instances we can produce of his rectitude on other occasions, that he cannot be guilty of the alleged injustice. We reason from analogy, and in general reason fairly. But when we presume to judge of the Most High, instead of vindicating his rectitude under a Providence seemingly severe, instead of reverting, as in the case of our friend, to the thousand instances in which we have tasted of his kindness, instead of inferring from his past goodness, that the present inexplicable dispensation must be consistent, though we cannot explain how, we mutinously accuse him of inconsistency, nay of injustice. But what a clue has revelation furnished, to the intricate labyrinth, which seems to involve the conduct we impiously question. It unrolls the volume of Divine Providence, lays open the mysterious map of infinite Wisdom, throws a bright light on the darkest dispensations, vindicates the inequality of appearances, and points to that blessed region, where to all who have truly loved and served God, every apparent wrong shall be proved to be unimpeachably right, every affliction a mercy, and the severest trials the choicest blessings. So blind has sin made us, that the glory of God is concealed from us, by the very means which, could we discern things aright, would display it. The train of second causes which God has so marvellously disposed, obstructs our view of himself. To see him as he is, is reserved for a better world: we shall then see how necessary it was for those whose bliss is now so perfect, to have been poor, despised and oppressed."

Some of Mrs. More's correspondents, much as they admired this work as to its general tendency, yet imagined that she had fixed the standard of Christian attainment considerably too high. In reply to a letter from Sir W. Pepy's to this effect, she remarks, in a tone of unaffected humility: "Your approbation of my work is to me very comforting and encouraging. My expectations from it were low. It is nothing to the public, that it was written in constant pain, and in such a hurry, that it was very little longer in writing than in printing. But life is short, mine is particularly uncertain, and I had persuaded myself, that it was better to bring it out in a defective state, than not at all. I now see many faults and deficiencies, which I have laboured to diminish. I thank you for telling me of the objections made to it. Your remarks would lead to a large field of discussion, which I would rather enter upon with you in conversation than in writing. I am not aware of that excessive strictness of which your pious friends complain. The gospel is strict. The cutting off a right hand, and plucking out a right eye, though only used as metaphors, are surely more strict than any thing I have said. It is true, I maintain that the standard of duty should always be kept high. The very best of us are sure to pull it down many pegs in our practice, but how much lower is the practice of those who fix a lower standard than the New Testament holds out! Your friends whom you speak of as doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God, have indeed reached high attainments. I believe I do wrong to judge of others by myself, for I declare to you, that I have such a constant sense of imperfection in my best thoughts, words, and actions, that I continually need the refuge of a Saviour, and continually petition for pardon through him, and for the purifying, comforting assistance of his Spirit.

CHAPTER XV.

Tour through Staffordshire and Derbyshire—Commences writing 'Christian Morals'—Motives for composing it—State of Mind during the time—Anxiety to be useful—Publication of 'Christian Morals'; its circulation; its merits—Death of her eldest Sister—Reflections occasioned thereby—Tour through Huntingdonshire—Frequent indisposition—Commences her 'Essay on St. Paul'—Providential escape from fire—Publication of her 'Essay'; its reception; its merits; its design.

Early in the autumn of 1811, in compliance with many pressing invitations, Mrs. More paid a visit to Mr. Gisborne, at Yoxall-lodge in Staffordshire, whose works she had read with great pleasure. She staid there a month, spending the time most pleasantly in excursions into the surrounding country. On one occasion, during the time, she performed a tour through some parts of Derbyshire. From Mr. Gisborne's, she proceeded to visit some friends at Shrewsbury, and passed thence into North Wales, visiting in her rambles Llangollen Vale, with which she was much delighted. On her way home she spent some days very pleasantly with the Bishop of Gloucester, by whom she was most kindly received.

The winter was spent at Barley Wood in the quiet, yet earnest pursuit of increasing religious knowledge. The deep tone of piety which still pervaded her mind, may be inferred from the following extract from a letter, dated February 1812. "I am once

more going through my darling Archbishop Leighton's Commentary on St. Peter. It is a mine of intellectual and spiritual wealth. Each chapter would make a volume of modern theology. Nothing is superficially described. He always goes to the bottom, and without wearying the reader, hardly leaves any thing unsaid. He always catches hold on the heart." This description of the archbishop's productions is strikingly correct, and accords with the estimate formed of them, universally, by cultivated and pious minds, whose approbation will generally be in exact proportion to the depth of their piety. The superficial, mere professor of religion, will find in them little to admire.

Much of Mrs. More's time continued to be taken up in her village labours, in promoting the success of which, as far as her health would permit, she was as zealous and active as she had ever been; but she was often interrupted by long and painful attacks of illness. It afforded her, however, great pleasure to learn that her schools were in a flourishing state, and that several, whom she had herself instructed, some years previously, had now become able to instruct others; so that her absence was of less importance than it would otherwise have been. It gratified her not a little, that the obvious beneficial results of her labours had at length completely silenced all opponents, and excited the admiration of many, who, though they did not like to oppose them, were disposed to look at them, at first, as rather a dangerous innovation.

Though her frequent attacks of indisposition at this time might have justified her in remaining entirely inactive, yet her Christian zeal prompted her to convert even these seasons of painful confinement into a useful purpose. It occurred to her, that there were many important subjects bearing on practical religion which she had not adverted to in her former

work, from the discussion of which she hoped some benefit would arise: hence she commenced the composition of her 'Christian Morals,' a work, differing in a very slight degree, except in its title, from 'Practical Piety.' The subjects introduced are of a more general character, but still they have a decidedly personal application, and are equally adapted to promote individual piety. The work was composed during seasons of great debility, and often of severe suffering: yet it betrays no symptoms of mental feebleness, but equals, in vigour of conception, and beauty of illustration, its predecessor, which it excels, in some degree, in the simplicity of its style.

From the opening chapter, on the writing of pious books, and indeed from many parts of the work, it appears evident, that, during its composition, which occupied her for the greater part of 1812, she exercised a vigilant inspection over her mind: "All things in this world," she correctly observes, "carry in them such evident marks of imperfection, and are so liable to be infected with error; good is separated from evil by such slight partitions, and the deviation from what is right is so easy, that even undertakings, which seem most exempt from danger, are yet often uncertain in their issue. Writing a soundly religious book might seem to put in a claim for an exempt case; but does experience prove that even this exemption is infallible? The employment is good: the motive is likely to be pure: the work may be unexceptionable in its tendency, and useful in its consequences. But is it always beneficial to the writer, in the proportion in which he intends it to be profitable to the reader? Is he not in danger of being absorbed in the mechanical part of the work, till religious composition dwindles into mere secular operation? May he not be diverted from the main object by an undue attention to eloquence, to cor-

rectness, to ornament—all which, indeed, are necessary; for if he would benefit, he must be read; if he would be read, he must please; if he would please, he must endeavour to excel; but may he not take too much pains to please, and so become less solicitous to captivate than to benefit, both the reader and himself? May not the very lopping and pruning of his work, the flowers which he is so anxiously sticking into it, the little decorations with which he is setting off those parts which he fears may be thought dry and dull, raise a sensation in his mind, not unlike that which a vain beauty feels in decking her person? May he not, by too much confidence in his own powers, be blind to errors obvious to all but himself; or else, may he not use the file too assiduously, and, by over labour in smoothing the asperities of his style, diminish the force of his meaning, polishing honest vigour into unprofitable eloquence?"

The popularity of Mrs. More's publications did not render her insensible to the responsibility of again appearing before the public. She evidently regarded the production of a work professedly treating on religion, as a matter of much importance. She had never (as she well remarks in the preface) purchased the indulgence of the public by flattery; its support had never been made either a payment for softening errors that required to be exposed and corrected, or a reward for incense offered to the passions, for sentiments accommodated to the defects of any reigning opinion or any prevailing practice; nor had she conciliated their regard by any acts of unworthy adulation. Well knowing what the reader ought to expect, her deepest anxiety was not only to avoid injuring him by the concealment of truth or the maintenance of error, but with equal care to avoid giving him any just cause of offence. Still, in questions of a momentous kind, she would not on

any consideration disguise the truth or palliate error. "Sincere as would be my concern," she says, "if any stroke of my pen 'should tend to make one worthy man my foe,' yet the feeling of having contributed to mislead even one youthful mind, by the suppression of a truth, or the establishment of a falsehood, would be more painful than any censures which an imprudent honesty might expose me to."

Mrs. More had been before the public often enough to know the chief besetments of authors. These she describes in her chapter on the writers of pious books, with much accuracy and force. None but an individual accustomed jealously to scrutinise the workings of his mind could have written many passages in this chapter. Though by no means indifferent to her literary reputation, yet she was not ignorant of its attendant evils; hence she shrewdly remarks: "Among the many unsuspected, but salutary checks to the vanity of a pious writer, it will not be the least, that his popularity may make the intrinsic value of his work questionable; that he may be indebted for its favourable reception, not to its excellencies, but to its defects; not to the deep, but to the superficial views he has taken of religion; that it may be more acceptable only because it is less searching; that if he has pleased, it is owing to his having been more cautious than faithful. If there be reason to suspect that his success arises from his having skimmed the surface of truth, when he ought to have penetrated its depth; that he has reconciled the reader to Christianity and to himself, by a disingenuous discretion, by trimming between God and the world, by concealing truths which he ought to have brought forward, or by palliating those he durst not discover; popularity thus obtained will afford ground of humiliation, rather than of triumph." These were the heart-searchings to which Mrs. More was accustomed to subject herself, and this

was the watchful spirit over herself she ever cultivated.

In tracing the lineaments of her mind, as they are seen in the opening chapters of this work, we discover the serious spirit with which she entered upon the work of composition, and the deep concern she felt that the cause of religion might not suffer by any injudicious treatment on her part. "In treating on any awful topic," she remarks, "the pious writer, feeling a solemn conviction of its vast importance, trembles under the idea of not being entirely faithful. His own heart is deeply impressed with the dignity of the subject, and he deprecates the thought of shrinking from the boldest avowal of every truth, or of withholding the most powerful enforcement to the practice of virtue. Honest, though imperfect, sincere though fallible, he endeavours to bring his principles, his faith, and his convictions, into full operation; he warmly declares what he cordially feels, and faithfully testifies what he firmly believes. But when he comes to act he is sometimes brought to be too keenly sensible of the very fault in himself against which he has been cautioning others; deeply does he lament that he feels strong remains of that corruption against which he has directed his attacks; some temptation presses him, some infirmity cleaves to him. These unsubdued frailties prove that he is a man, but not that he is a hypocrite. The writer on religious topics, however, is the person, who of all others, ought to watch himself most narrowly. He has given a public pledge of his principles. He has held out a rule, to which, as others will be looking with a critical eye to discover how far his conduct falls short of, so he should, himself, constantly bear in mind the elevation of his own standard, and he will be the more circumspect, from the persuasion, that not only his own character, but that of religion itself will suffer by his departure from it. The con-

sciousness of the inferiority of his practice to his principles will furnish him with new motives to humility. The solemn dread lest his inconsistency should be produced against him at the last day, becomes a fresh incentive to higher actions, stirs him up to augmented vigilance, and quickens him to more earnest prayer. He experiences at once the dread of appearing better than he really is, by the high tone of piety in his compositions; or of making others worse by lowering that tone to bring his professions nearer to the level of his life. Perhaps the most humiliating moment he can ever experience is, when by an accidental glance at some former work, he is reminded how little he himself has profited by the arguments with which he has, probably, successfully combated the errors of others."

The above extracts are given as descriptive of Mrs. More's state of mind at the time she composed this work, which was published early in 1813, and which, like its predecessor, commanded a very extensive sale. Though written in her best style, yet its chief excellence consists in the correct delineations of the human heart, with which it everywhere abounds. In almost every page, proofs are given of the writer's intimate acquaintance with this important branch of knowledge. Her remarks were evidently the result not so much of the knowledge she had collected from books, though she had read very extensively, and to excellent purpose, as of the accurate observations she had made of the workings of her own mind and of the minds of others. She had evidently studied human nature most closely; and so truly does she describe its corrupt workings, that one can hardly peruse any chapter of the work without benefit. An impression rests on the reader's mind, of self-dissatisfaction, and yet of cordial esteem for the writer through whose pen it has been produced; because a full conviction forces itself upon him, that the writer's

object in composing the work, was to promote the best interests of the human race. Literary reputation, it is easily discovered, was not made the supreme, but the subordinate object. To please the fancy, it is clear, was not her aim, but to benefit the soul. In one of her letters she remarks, "If it please God to make 'Christian Morals' an instrument of doing a little good, I hope I shall be humbly thankful for the support he graciously afforded me in writing it. This is the praise I desire; if this be granted I shall meet censure cheerfully, conscious that I can do nothing of myself."

Barley Wood had now become a most attractive spot. Many resorted thither to enjoy the pleasure, were it for ever so short a season, of Mrs. More's conversation. Not a few who had been benefited by her publications, visited it, some to express their obligations, others to solicit her advice, which was always promptly and cheerfully given. All were sure of a kind reception, though on some occasions the number was so great, that she complained of the constant interruption it occasioned, as a serious evil. Writing to an esteemed friend, while busily engaged in composing her 'Christian Morals,' she remarks: "Great languor of frame, in addition to tormenting bile and more tormenting company, must make part of my apology for not writing you before. I should not, however, think I was treating you like the friend of my heart, did I not name a more efficient interruption. I have been confined for six months out of eight, since last Christmas; and foreseeing, or rather knowing, that I have not many more Christmases to look forward to, I was willing to turn my imprisonment to some little account, and have been writing some more *last words*. You remember how frequently, in the last century, fresh books came out under the title of 'More last Words of old Mr. Dodd.' This has been, I think,

pretty much my case; and though I do not know that my writings do any good, yet I am led to say with Cato,

"While yet I live, let me not live in vain."

The book is to be called 'Christian Morals.' It is not yet finished, and whether it is worth finishing, I hardly know, but Providence sometimes works by weak instruments. Had I expected to be so overwhelmed with company, I believe I should have gone from home to write more at leisure, but it is now too late in the season."

But such was Mrs. More's love of society, that it was only when she was closely engaged in composition, or when her visitors seemed to delight in trifling, rather than in useful conversation, that she ever felt company to be annoying. Individuals asking advice were never deemed tedious, or treated as if their visits were troublesome. Her advice, however, which was often singularly judicious, she gave in all cases most cheerfully. "What do you do," said a friend to her, on one occasion, "when ladies come to you with their difficulties? Suppose, for instance, they have been brought up in a practically irreligious, though perhaps decorous, circle, but, by the blessing of God, religion has touched their hearts, their affections are set upon things above, and not upon things on the earth; they feel the importance of the soul and of eternity, but their friends and connexions, perhaps even their parents, oppose their conscientious feelings. The Bible tells them to come out from the world, and they wish so to do; but their friends wish them to live in it, and hence arise, what appear to them, conflicting obligations. They know not how to reconcile their duty to God with their duty to their parents; and they find much distress of mind, in being compelled to join in gay parties, to attend various public amusements, Sunday

dinners, Sunday drives, with other similar inconsistencies." "It is a very affecting case," she would say; "but I always tell them to be very meek, very dutiful, very amiable, very patient, to pray much, never to give unnecessary cause of offence; and that God will in due time make their path plain before them." Advice more suitable to the difficult case supposed it would be impossible to give.

In the spring of 1813, Mrs. More was called to mourn over the loss of her eldest sister, Mrs. Mary More, who, after a long affliction, borne with exemplary meekness and resignation, closed an active and most useful life, on Easter Sunday, 1813. Though the event had been long expected, as the deceased had been for many weeks gradually sinking under the infirmities of age, yet was the separating stroke painfully felt. But a well-assured hope, that death to her sister was eternal gain—that she had exchanged a state of pain and sorrow, for one of felicity and rest, and that the separation was only for a season, greatly alleviated the anguish She thus alluded to the event, in a letter written a few days afterwards: "The solemn scene is closed—my dear, eldest sister is escaped from this world of sin, and is, I trust, through the mercies of her God and the merits of her Saviour, translated to a world of peace, where there will be neither sin, sorrow, nor separation. Her desire to be gone was great. We had all of us the melancholy satisfaction to see her breathe her last. I thought it something blessed to die on Easter Sunday — to descend to the grave on the anniversary day, when Jesus had triumphed over it. It is pleasant to see death without its terrors. We visit the cold remains many times a day, and I am dividing my morning, between the contemplation of her serene countenance, and reading my favourite book, 'Baxter's Saints' Rest."

It had ever been the wish of Mrs. More, from

the time she had devoted herself to religion, to diminish, in the higher circles, the aversion to real piety, which she knew prevailed extensively among them. To accomplish this, she had, herself, acting on the apostle's precedent, often submitted to things of which she could not approve, though in themselves matters of indifference. Thus had she become all things to all men, that, if possible, she might save some. Her want of success in effecting this to the extent she desired, often caused her regret. She seems to have imagined, that religion had been injured by its professors keeping too much aloof from the world. If she did not think that the world might be won over to the cause of piety, by a little conformity to it in things not positively forbidden, yet she evidently believed that its aversion to it might, by such means, be diminished, if not entirely removed. To a certain extent, she was correct in these views. Religion, when clothed in its own lovely attire, neither frozen into asceticism nor heated into enthusiasm, but embodying its lively features in the conduct and general temper of an individual, can hardly fail to exert a most salutary influence on all who behold it. A vast improvement, in this respect, has taken place in our day; and we may, in this, as in other things not less important, be said to be reaping the labours of Mrs. More, Mr. Wilberforce, and some other writers of the same stamp. The finger of scorn is not pointed at the pious so frequently in the upper circles: we hope, indeed, that religion is making considerable progress among all classes. The commencement of this important change Mrs. More witnessed with feelings of the highest satisfaction: "My heart rejoices at the progress of religious society," she writes: "wide, and more wide, the blessed circle spreads in the elevated walks of life. What extensive good has Mr. Wilberforce done among young pessons of fashion, by the intel-

lectual and religious intercourse of his family. A few elegant quiet houses, where enquiring minds know they shall meet with good company, in the best sense of the word, where their good breeding will be brought into no suspicion, and their good sense into no discredit, would, I am sure, fortify and cheer the spirits, as well as confirm the principles of many."

But though Mrs. More felt assured that piety was making its way in the upper circles, and that the number of its adherents had greatly increased in this important and influential class, yet she knew that the aversion of the world to real religion had not diminished: its disapprobation was less boldly expressed, but its dislike to it was the same: "I am aware," she says, "that all one's prudence is not sufficient to clear away the charge of enthusiasm, which the world is ever watching for an occasion to bring forward, against those who exhibit a more than usual degree of Christian consistency in their conduct; but this they must be content to bear, for their great Master's sake, who bore so much for them." Painful experience had taught her, that it was utterly out of her power, by conduct the most conciliatory and kind, to transform the hatred of the world to religion into love; or to induce men of worldly habits even to look upon general piety with other feelings than those of entire dislike. Perhaps no individual ever made a more determined effort (or possessed the means of making it with such good effect) to obtain the world's favourable opinion, not for her own purposes, but for their good, than Mrs. More: and certainly no one ever more merited the world's regard, for the efforts she had made to improve mankind; yet, no sooner did she insist upon that purity of conduct in the professors of religion which Christianity enjoins, than she found, to her cost, that its antipathy to piety was unchanged: contempt, derision and insult, were thrown

upon her by her opponents for no other cause: a proof of the impossibity of conciliating the nominalists of any age. As a pious clergyman once well observed, "We see, in her case, that every attempt to gain and secure the world's favour is utterly vain, if you support real religion, and act upon it yourself.—Look at Hannah More, at her genius, popularity, influence, abjuration of cant and bad taste, and her innocence of every thing which can disgust mankind; the friend of Garrick, Johnson, Reynolds, Burke, and of all their envied circles; and see what treatment religion will ever meet with from the world."

The repeated attacks of indisposition which Mrs. More had experienced, though they had not in any degree impaired the vigour of her mind, had reduced her to that state of weakness, that she could, with difficulty, be persuaded to leave her house. At the earnest solicitation, however, of Lady Olivia Sparrow, she consented to pay her ladyship a visit, at her seat in Huntingdonshire, in the summer of 1813: but such were the effects of the journey thither, that she was compelled to keep her room for a month after her arrival. On her recovery, though still suffering under great debility, she determined to visit Lord Barham, at his seat in Kent, who was then suffering under a severe attack of illness; and for whom, as a Christian nobleman, she had ever felt the highest regard. On her way thither, she stopped for a few days at the seat of her much-valued friend, Mr. H. Hoare, at Mitcham, a most benevolent and pious gentleman; and while there, she heard, with regret, of Lord Barham's death. She next spent a few days with Mr. Thornton and Mr. Wilberforce, and on her return home paid a short visit to Lady Waldegrave at Strawberry Hill, and to Mrs. Garrick at Hampton, places endeared to her from early associations.

Throughout the whole of this excursion, though her health was so precarious that she was evidently

under the impression that she was paying her last visit, yet her mind was in a state of delightful tranquillity. Writing to Lady Sparrow, immediately on her arrival at Barley Wood, she remarks: "While writing my last letter to you, I felt extremely unwell, but did not expect, that in the week I staid at Mr. Hoare's, I should only take one meal with the family: so it pleased God. It pleased him also to raise me up again; and as soon as I was able, we removed for two days to Battersea Bridge. We next went to Kensington Grove; and Mr. Wilberforce returned from the funeral of my revered friend at Barham Court, just in time to receive us. We could not be prevailed upon to stay more than two days; but, in that short space their kindness enabled us to see an almost incredible number of friends, the greater part of whom I never expected to see again till we should meet in a better world. Strawberry Hill, which we took in our way, and where we spent one night, recalled to my mind a thousand recollections, partly pleasing, but more painful. The same feelings were excited in us as we afterwards called at Mrs. Garrick's. The library, the lawn, the temple of Shakspeare, all of which I *would* see, for the last time. What wit, what talents, what vivacity, what friendship, had I enjoyed in both these places! Where are their possessors now? I have been mercifully spared, to see the vanity of every thing that is not connected with eternity; and seeing this, how heavy will be my condemnation if I do not lay it to heart."

In the autumn of this year, (1813,) Mrs. More had the pleasure to receive, at Barley Wood, visits from several individuals whom she highly esteemed. Among the most distinguished of these was Mr. Wilberforce, with whom she might truly say, "it was delightful to spend an evening." Her attacks of indisposition were still frequent and severe, yet

could she not be prevailed upon to give up her village exertions. "My own health," she writes, "and that of my sister Patty, is broken and infirm, yet we still, except in severe weather, attend our schools: we have under our care about seven hundred children, besides instructing the parents, who attend in the evening. Our teachers were mostly trained up by ourselves, so that our plans are pretty well adhered to." The great success of these institutions, and the facility with which she could now carry them on, by the aid of tutors who had themselves been her pupils, with the blessings which she knew they were the means of imparting, encouraged her to persevere in these labours of love.

By the following extract from a letter which Mrs. More wrote to Lady Sparrow, dated 27th December, 1813, it will be seen, not only that her piety increased in elevation with her years, but that she felt an increasing pleasure in benevolence. "I cannot suffer this holy and gracious season to pass without wishing you, not the compliments, but the comforts of it—without praying to our heavenly Father to give you all the blessings it is calculated to bestow. This season seems as if it was meant, not only to stir up our devout and pious affections to God, and the most ardent gratitude for the inestimable gift of his Son, but to excite our warm feelings for our friends, and to quicken our desires for their temporal comforts, but more especially for their spiritual good—their advancement in grace—the improvement of their prospects of eternal glory, and to urge them to increased endeavours after it. There is something beautiful in the union of religion and benevolence, which seems peculiarly to exist at this season."

Mrs. More had always much admired the combination of excellencies found in the character of St. Paul. They had often occupied her meditations; and the more she contemplated them, the more inte-

resting did they appear. So fine an illustration of the practical effects of Christianity, when cordially embraced by an individual of the highest mental endowments, could not but form a subject of unusual interest to a mind like hers. It now occurred to her, that it might form a useful subject on which to employ her pen, and she accordingly commenced the composition of the work subsequently published under the title of 'An Essay on the Character and Practical Writings of St. Paul.' She began this work very early in 1814, and devoted to it all her leisure time the remaining part of the year.

As Mrs. More did not quit Barley Wood during the whole of this year, she was visited, at this attractive spot, by many distinguished individuals. The composition of her new work, however, so much engrossed her attention, that she cultivated retirement, and seemed increasingly to feel its value. Writing to Lady Sparrow, in June, she playfully remarks: "We are living more quietly than usual, most of our friends, from all quarters, having met in one common centre—*emperor-hunting*. London, I hear, is quite in a state of derangement. The very reading of the accounts makes my head share in the vertigo, but I am thankful to be out of its reach. Nothing under the sun can now repay me for the terror and agitation of a crowd. This is not merely the effect of age, but a constitutional dread of bustle. I must, however, prepare for a tiny squeeze at our little annual Wrington Bible Meeting, next Tuesday. We shall, I fear, cut but a poor figure, as our orators have caught the mania, and are all flown to London."

At the close of the year, just as she had nearly completed her 'Essay on St. Paul,' an event occurred, which, but for a providential deliverance, must have been most disastrous. On reaching across the fire-place for a book, the hinder part of her

shawl caught fire, and before she was aware of the danger, the flame had communicated with other parts of her dress. Happily she had the presence of mind instantly to ring the bell, and to step gently across the room to the door to call for help. Miss Roberts, who was staying at Barley Wood at the time, was immediately at hand, and succeeded, though not without great difficulty, in extinguishing the flames before they had materially injured her person. In doing this, such had been the progress of the fire, that Miss Roberts's hands were severely burnt in several places; and if assistance had not been thus promptly given, the consequences must have been most distressing, for though Mrs. More lost not her self-possession, yet, without assistance, it would hardly have been possible for her to extinguish the flame.

This event made a deep impression on Mrs. More's mind. All around her witnessed how gratefully she acknowledged the deliverance. Often would she exclaim, with emotions of devout gratitude, "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." In a letter written shortly afterwards, she thus adverts to it: "I consider myself a monument of God's mercy, as I was one sheet of flame before any help arrived. Another moment it is supposed would have rendered the flame unextinguishable. Many trifling circumstances which appear to have been providentially directed, contributed to my preservation. Being confined with a bad cold, I had that day only put on a thick stuff gown, which however was burnt through the back and sleeves; the day before I wore a muslin gown: I had also on at the time three shawls, the one next me was reduced almost to tinder before it could be got off; of the others little is left. It was in heroically tearing off these, and taking me flaming as I was, as if I had

been an infant, and laying me on the carpet, that Miss Roberts burnt her hands so terribly. They were healed, however, sooner than my slight wounds, which are healed also. What a warning was this visitation to keep prepared for a sudden call! Yet I fear that I do not turn it to a proper account."

This event, with the multiplicity of congratulatory letters on her escape, to which it gave rise, caused some delay in the publication of her forthcoming Essay. "You inquire," she writes to Lady Sparrow, "after St. Paul, he is in progress; but his course is much interrupted by the multitude of letters I receive daily, not from friends, those are refreshing—but from strangers, many of them impertinent applications, not a few of which duty and conscience oblige me to answer, though I am a poor casuist." The letters of which Mrs. More here complains, were applications, from individuals with whom she had no knowledge, for her opinion on controverted and difficult points, a species of annoyance to which distinguished authors are too often subject.

The 'Essay on the Character of St. Paul,' was published in two volumes, February 1815. Every copy of the first edition was disposed of the first day, and the work had a very extensive sale. In the preface, she remarks, with characteristic humility: "It is with no little diffidence that the writer of the following pages ventures to submit them to the public eye. She comes 'in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.' She is fully aware, that whoever undertakes to institute an enquiry into the character, and especially the writings of St. Paul, in a manner at all adequate to the dignity and excellence of both, should possess many and high requisites, to which she can make out no fair title. But, it would be useless to insist on her incompetency to the proper execution of such a

work, and her deficiencies in ancient learning, Biblical criticism, and deep theological knowledge, because the sagacity of the reader would not fail to be beforehand with her avowal in detecting them. It may however serve as some apology for the boldness of the present undertaking, that these volumes are not of a critical, but of a practical nature."

The design of this work was neither to give a biographical sketch of the apostle's character, nor to enquire critically into his writings; but rather to make such remarks on the prominent excellences of both as would be likely to benefit the reader. "Waving therefore," she says, "both from disinclination and from inability, whatever passages in St. Paul's writings may be considered controversial, the writer has endeavoured, though it must be confessed imperfectly and superficially, to bring forward his character as a model for our general imitation, and his practical writings as a storehouse for our general instruction, avoiding whatever might be considered as a ground for the discussion of any point not immediately tending to practical utility."

It must not, however, be imagined, notwithstanding this candid and liberal avowal, that Mrs. More supposed it possible to treat on the great subjects of Christian theology which form the chief feature of St. Paul's writings, so as to avoid giving offence to some party. She knew too much of human nature, and had seen, too frequently, the dire effects of a determined adherence to some favourite system, to expect this. "My book," she writes to a friend, on the eve of publication, "will be called, and justly, a presumptuous undertaking. I am sure, beforehand, of two classes of enemies; the very high Calvinists, and what is called the very high church party—two formidable bodies: but, as I have written, I trust, from my conscience, I shall patiently

submit to their different awards: I own, the subject is above my strength at best, and it is especially so, now that my little strength is of course less."

Anticipating an objection, which some would be likely to make, to the exhibition of the apostle as a pattern for our imitation, she judiciously remarks: "It may be thought unreasonable to propose, for general imitation, a character so highly gifted, so peculiarly circumstanced, as this inspired apostle: but it is the principal design of these pages to show, that our common actions are to be performed, and our common trials sustained, in somewhat of the same spirit and temper, with those high duties and those unparalleled sufferings to which St. Paul was called out: and that every Christian, in his measure and degree, should exhibit somewhat of the dispositions inculcated by that religion, of which the apostle was the brightest human example, as well as the most illustrious human teacher. Many read his epistles with deep reverence for the station they hold in the inspired oracles, without considering that they are, at the same time, supremely excellent for the unequalled applicability to life and manners: and many, while they highly respect the writer, think him too high to set for an example of ordinary attainment:" it was therefore Mrs. More's principal object in this work, as she continues to state, "not, indeed, to diminish the dignity of the apostle, but to diminish, in one sense, the distance at which we are apt to hold so exalted a model; to draw him into a more intimate connexion with ourselves; to let him down, not to our level, but to our familiarity: to induce us to resort to him, not only in the great demands and trying occurrences of life, but to bring both the writings and the conduct of this distinguished saint to mix with our common concerns;—to incorporate the doctrines which he teaches, the principles which he exhibits, and the

precepts which he enjoins, into our ordinary habits, into our every-day practice: to consider him, not only as the writer, who has the most ably and successfully unfolded the sublime truths of our religion—as the instructor, who has supplied us with the noblest and purest system of ethics, but who has even condescended to extend his code to the more minute exigences and relations of familiar life."

These objects Mrs. More never lost sight of in her work: she maintains, in a style more chaste than any of her former productions, and not less animated, that we are bound, as Christians, to seek the attainment of the same moral excellence, the same consistent, well-regulated piety, the same ardent zeal, in the Christian course, as that which distinguished St. Paul.

CHAPTER XVI.

Trying bereavements—Serious attack of illness—Declining health of her sisters—Christian submission—Death of an esteemed friend—Efforts to promote subordination, and to relieve the distress of the poor—Death of her sister Sarah—Reflections on the death of her Royal Highness, Princess Charlotte of Wales—Republication of her 'Practical Piety'—Pleasing information of the extensive usefulness of her works—Continued attention to her village labours.

The year 1815 opened with the occurrence of some mournful events, peculiarly trying to Mrs. More. In January she lost her excellent friend, Henry Thornton, Esq., whose princely liberality had mainly contributed to the support of her schools. In February, her wounds were opened afresh, by the sudden removal of an esteemed, most promising young man, Mr. John Bowdler: and shortly afterwards, she had the additional grief to hear of the death of that most indefatigable and devoted missionary, Doctor Buchanan. Events thus afflicting were not a little trying, to one who had now attained her seventieth year, and whose zeal in the Christian cause had increased with her advancing age.

The faith of the Christian is often put to the severest test by these trying events; and though he knows that they are under the direction of an unerring Providence, yet he cannot always enjoy the

comfort arising from that knowledge. In a letter to Lady Sparrow, Mrs. More thus records her feelings on the occasion: "How, alas! shall I touch on the successive grievous strokes with which we have been smitten in three short weeks. They seem to have come rapidly upon us, like the messengers of sad tidings to Job: we may say, with good old Jacob; 'All these things are against us:' but God's ways are not as our ways: He saw that our lamented friends were matured for heaven, beyond the usual ripeness even of distinguished Christians: they have left us ensamples, both how to live and how to die: their lives were patterns; may their deaths be both a warning and a weaning to us, and forward us in our pilgrimage through this vale of tears. In Mr. Thornton I have lost, not only the most wise, and consistently virtuous and pious, but the most attached, faithful, and confidential friend: my schools, too, have lost their principal support for twenty-five years; but my own life is likely to be so short, that I trust the goodness of Providence will enable me to carry them on to the end. Dr. Buchanan is an irreparable loss: you will be pleased with a conversation he had with a friend a short time before his death: he was describing the minute pains he had been taking with the proofs and revisions of the 'Syriac Testament,' every page of which passed under his eye five times before it was finally sent to press: 'I expected,' he said, 'to have found this repeated perusal irksome, but, instead of its being so, every fresh perusal of the sacred page unveiled new beauties;' here he stopped, and burst into tears: 'Do not be alarmed,' said he to his friend, on recovering himself; 'I could not suppress the emotions I felt, as I recollected the delight it had pleased God to afford me in the reading of his word.'"

The increasing depth of Mrs. More's piety, with her advancing years, was evident to all around her.

She took the liveliest interest in every society formed to promote the diffusion of religious knowledge; and it afforded her the highest satisfaction, to perceive that Christians generally were beginning to become actively zealous, in various ways, and by different societies, to diffuse the blessings of Christianity She rejoiced, that institutions formed for this purpose, met with far better success than had been anticipated by their most sanguine friends. In the true spirit of Christian liberality, she was a well-wisher to all, and a supporter of most; but she gave her decided preference to that noble institution, the British and Foreign Bible Society. In the formation of branch societies, in the districts in each county, she greatly delighted; and it was principally through her exertions that one had been formed at Wrington, in the vicinity of Barley Wood. Aware that much support to this excellent institution, unexceptionable as it was, and free as it was from all sectarianism, was not to be expected from the surrounding influential inhabitants, she determined, in some degree to make up the deficiency, by giving to it her warmest support. At the anniversary meeting, therefore, she generously entertained, in a manner the most hospitable and kind, all who, by their attendance, were inclined to give it their support.

In a letter to Mr. Wilberforce, who, from the deep interest he took in the same good cause, and, indeed, in every thing that related to the interests of religion and benevolence, must have been delighted to receive such intelligence, she describes the anniversary meetings of this kind, held in the summer of 1815:—"This hot weather, trying as it is, has, on the whole, been of service to us; as you will believe when I tell you what a gala we have been enabled to give. Our anniversary Bible Meeting, at Wrington, was held lately. And though our country is so thinly planted with gentry, (the spiritual climate also

being rather cold,) that if some one were not to make an effort to support the society, it would come to nothing; yet the meeting was the most genteel and numerous we ever had. If our oratory was not of the first brilliancy, it had good sense and good temper to recommend it. We had near forty clergymen of the Establishment, so that even archdeacon ——— cannot plant us in his hot-bed of heresy and schism. When the meeting was over, the superior part of the company resorted, by previous invitation, to Barley Wood. A hundred sat down to dinner, and about a hundred and sixty to tea. Happily it was a fine day, and above fifty dined under the trees—the overflowings from our small house. They all enjoyed themselves exceedingly, and it had all the gaiety of a public garden. Some may think it would be better to add £20 to our subscription, and save ourselves so much trouble; but we take this trouble from a conviction of the contrary. The many young persons of fortune present, by assisting at this little festivity, will learn to connect the idea of innocent cheerfulness with that of religious societies, and 'go and do likewise.' For no other cause on earth would we encounter the fatigue."

These interesting meetings, though unavoidably attended with considerable trouble, were seasons of great enjoyment to one who, like Mrs. More, took a benevolent interest in every thing that seemed likely to promote the advancement of piety.

In the spring of 1816, she suffered another severe attack of indisposition, which for some days threatened serious results. Its effects she describes, after she had sufficiently recovered to use her pen, in language full of devout submission to the Divine will: "I have been ill since my last attack of fever; my nights being, not only wakeful, but harassing and distressing. But I am getting better, though I thought I was rapidly breaking up. The fever has

left me a wholesome warning. Like Barzillia, I have long ceased to hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women; but though I hope I can still discern between good and evil, yet I cannot taste what I eat or what I drink. I have lost the two senses of smell and taste, completely, for six weeks. It has given me an excellent lesson, not to overlook common mercies, for I forgot to value these blessings till I had lost them."

Warmly admiring the productions of Mrs. More's pen, and persuaded, notwithstanding her age, and the frequent interruptions of her health, that her mind still retained all its vigour, and that she was even more capable than she had ever been of promoting the cause of piety, Mr. Wilberforce suggested the propriety of her engaging in some other work. Her reply, written with a happy mixture of jocose seriousness, shows that she felt the force of his application, and was ready to comply with it, but was prevented by the number of visitors she was constantly receiving. "You bid me not be silent, under the pretence of living in a hermitage. Alas! Barley Wood is nothing less. Thinking it right, many years ago, to gain a little interval between the world and the grave, when I renounced the society of the grave and the gay, the learned and the witty, I fully made up my mind to associate only with country people. Yet it so happens, that the retirement I sought I have never at present been able to find; for though we neither return visits nor give invitations, yet, I think, except when quite confined by sickness, I never saw more people, known and unknown, in my gayest days. They come to me as to the witch of Endor; and I suppose I shall soon be desired to tell fortunes and cast nativities. I do little or no good to their minds, and they do much harm to my body, as talking inflames my chest." The readiness of Mrs. More, on all occasions, to give

religious instruction to all who really sought it, shows that it could not have been of individuals seeking her counsel in this way that she complained. It was only of those who appeared to have no object but the mere visit, and whose conversation proved that they set as little value on their own time as on that of others, that she found irksome.

Scarcely had Mrs. More recovered from her severe illness, in 1816, when she had to witness painful and alarming symptoms of the declining health of her three sisters. The state of her mind in these trying circumstances will be seen in a brief apologetic reply she wrote to the late pious and highly-gifted Alexander Knox, from whom she had recently received two interesting letters. "Such a letter—nay, two such letters, and from such a friend, and no notice taken, just as if I had received no such letters, or did not value them, or was not grateful for them, or was not gratified by them. But when I tell you the situation of my family, you will forgive my delay and brevity. My poor sister Martha has not been out more than three or four times for the last nine months; I fear she is in a declining state, and I have sad prognostics. Her loss to me, to whom she has been hands, and eyes, and feet, would be incalculable. My lively sister, Sarah, who still retains, at times, all the spirit and vivacity of youth, is pronounced to be far gone in a dropsy. We lately thought her going very rapidly, but I bless God she somewhat rallied, and may, I hope, be spared to us a little longer, but her symptoms are very bad. My now eldest sister, who has long had paralytic indications, had been many weeks in bed, with a mortification in her leg. This has been resisted by vigorous means; but last week, after many hours of quiet sleep, we found, on her awaking, that she had lost the powers of swallowing and of articulation. She has remained

speechless ever since; and it is a pitiable sight to explore the asking eye and to receive no answer. She seems to look at us, but there is no speculation in those looks. These are trying scenes: pray for us, my good friend, that they may be salutary."

These were, indeed, most trying scenes to a mind like Mrs. More's. But severely as she felt them, she complained not. She endured, as seeing Him who is invisible. In the letter from which the above extract is quoted, she continues: "I am so far your disciple, that is, so much of an optimist, as to see a graciously providential hand in all these dealings. I feel, even at my age, that I stand in need of reiterated correction. My temper is naturally gay. This gaiety, even time and sickness have not much impaired. I have carried too much sail. My life, upon the whole, must be reckoned an uncommonly prosperous and happy one. I have been blessed with more friends of a superior cast than have often fallen to the lot of so humble an individual. Nothing but the grace of God, and frequent attacks through life, of very severe sickness, could have kept me in tolerable order. If I am no better with all these visitations, what should I have been without them? No, my dear sir, I have never yet felt a blow of which I did not perceive the indispensable necessity, in which I did not, on reflection, see and feel the compassionate hand of Divine mercy—the chastisement of a tender parent. My chief regret is, that I cannot contrive to live sufficiently quiet. It is now many years since I built and planted this pretty little place, and voluntarily turned my back upon the gay, the great, and the brilliant, in whose society I had spent near thirty years. I had then, I thought, completed that which I had enjoyed in fancy, and anticipated in vision all my life. But the day-dream has never been realized; my interruptions from company, many of them strangers, are almost incessant. This ungratified but predominant

love of tranquillity, began so early, that when I was seven or eight years old, I used to say, that if I should ever live to have a house of my own, I would take care to have it built too low for a clock and too small for a harpsichord."

In the autumn of 1816 death was permitted to make another breach in Mrs. More's circle of friends, by removing Mrs. Stephens, the wife of the able advocate of the abolition of slavery, and sister of Mr. Wilberforce. A most devotedly pious lady, whose daily and hourly conduct, in the family and social circle, was most honourable to her Christian profession, and whose end was peace. Before the close of the year, and while mourning over the loss of this esteemed friend, she was bereaved of another of her sisters, Elizabeth More. In a letter to Lady Sparrow, who had heard of the event, and had sent her some letters of condolence, she writes: "How good and how kind are you! I cordially thank you for your two feeling letters. It has, as you have heard, pleased God to remove my poor sister Betsey from this world of sin and sorrow. I humbly trust, that through Him who loved her, and gave himself for her, that she is now a happy spirit; disencumbered of a suffering body, and escaped from all the infirmities of age, and the evils of life. She had, for many years, spent the greater part of her time in reading the Scriptures, and devotional books; and latterly, has read nothing else; and though she was of a reserved temper, and said little, yet I am persuaded she felt her own sinfulness, and was earnest in her supplications to the throne of grace for mercy. For the last fortnight, she was entirely speechless. It was a most pitiable sight, to see her struggling to express something she seemed to wish to say, for her intellect survived her power of articulation. May the remembrance of such scenes quicken us and make us labour more diligently to be followers of

them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises."

From the close of 1816 till the spring of the following year, owing chiefly to an unexampled stagnation in trade, and severe agricultural depression, was a period of unusual public excitement. Great distress prevailed among the labouring classes, and a daring spirit of insubordination and plunder was fostered, by the extensive circulation, among the poor, of sceptical tracts. It occurred to several of Mrs. More's friends, that if she could be induced again to employ her pen in the production of publications similar to those she had previously written on a like occasion, it would have a beneficial result. They accordingly made the case known to her, and ventured to solicit her aid. This was instantly and most cheerfully granted; and though at an advanced age, and with feeble health, she commenced these labours with all her former zeal and activity. A number of tracts and ballads were soon produced; all adapted, in different ways, to meet the evil. Many editions of these were published by a committee, formed for the purpose, in London, and it was thought with a beneficial result. Alluding to this new employment in one of her letters, she playfully writes: "And now shall I confess to you how low I have been sinking in the ranks of literature? I did not think to turn ballad-monger in my old age; but the strong and urgent representations I have had from the highest quarters, of the very alarming temper of the times, and the revolutionary spirit which shows itself, more or less, in all manufacturing towns, has led me to undertake, as a duty, a task I would gladly have avoided. I have written many songs, papers, &c., by way of antidote to this fatal poison. Thousands and tens of thousands have been circulated, without its being known from what source they proceeded. As to some of them, my quiet, perhaps my

safety, requires silence, where obnoxious names are mentioned. These I propose, some of them at least, to have expunged in the next edition."

In addition to these efforts of her pen, to benefit the working classes generally, Mrs. More now embarked, for the same purpose, some of her property, with Mr. Addington, then of the Treasury, at a considerable risk of losing a large sum. In one of her letters, she thus notices the circumstance: "Your kind present to our poor was very acceptable. The distress in two populous parishes, where I have schools, has been peculiarly great. They are all miners, and the almost entire stoppage of the great brass-works, reduced twelve hundred human creatures to absolute want. So I turned merchant myself: Mr. Addington and I set up trade, and have purchased a certain quantity of ore, every week, for three months; but I, not having, like my partner, a finger in the treasury, am compelled to stop; and he has stopped also."

These exertions to benefit others were not made at a time when she had no family cares to harass her mind; on the contrary, she was then suffering under severe domestic trials. Her now eldest sister had, for a long period, been gradually sinking, under the pressure of a most painful disease. Such was the anguish she endured, that for many months her death was daily, and indeed almost hourly expected. Her life, however, was protracted till the middle of the following May, when she yielded up her spirit into the hands of Jesus; exchanging a state of extreme suffering, for joys unspeakable and eternal. Mrs. More thus records this affecting event: "May 24, 1817. This day se'nnight my dear sister Sarah exchanged this sinful, sorrowful world, for a world, I trust, of everlasting happiness. Four months we had watched over her increasing disease: the last two exceeded in agony any thing I had ever witnessed. Poor Patty and I closely attended this

bed of suffering, but our distresses were mingled with much consolation. The sprightly, gay-tempered creature, whose vivacity age had not tamed, exhibited the most edifying spectacle I ever beheld. I cannot do justice to her humility, her patience, her submission. It was, at times, something almost more than resignation; it was a sort of spiritual triumph over the sufferings of her tormented body. She often said, 'I have never prayed for recovery, but for pardon: I do not fear death, but sin.' When she was herself, almost her whole time was spent in prayer. So exquisitely keen at times was her anguish, that we were frequently roused in the night by her piercing groans, which she vainly endeavoured to restrain. Our prayers for a gentle dissolution were granted; she expired in great tranquillity. May her example sink deep in the hearts of all who witnessed it. She commonly sent away her surgeon in tears. Pray for me, that I may be enabled to do, and to suffer the whole will of God. My three departed sisters have quitted the world in the same order of succession in which they entered it. My turn in course would be next. But all is in the hands of infinite wisdom and mercy."

This event was severely trying to Mrs. More, and her surviving sister. So keenly did they feel the bereavement, that for some weeks they were unable to see any friends. To divert her attention from this painful event, Mr. Wilberforce, at the close of the summer, again earnestly entreated her to write something calculated to check the revolutionary spirit, which still extensively prevailed.

In reply, she remarks, with characteristic humility: "How can you be so cruel, as to talk of my writing for France or England, or for any thing. I have long since hung up my harp. I did, to be sure, take it down in the spring, but it was then a *Jew's-harp*. Dire necessity, and the importunity of some people,

drove me to scribble about thirteen pieces, such as they were, in about six weeks, pretty well for a septuagenary I think."

In the autumn of 1817, the British nation was plunged into grief, by the sudden death, under circumstances peculiarly affecting, of her royal highness the Princess Charlotte of Wales. Mrs. More had ever watched, with deep concern, the steps taken to qualify that illustrious individual for the most exalted station she seemed destined to occupy. The interest she took in her welfare was the more intense, as she had reason to believe her own works, especially her 'Hints on the Education of a young Princess,' had contributed to form those pious habits which the amiable princess was known to practise. Writing to a friend, she thus piously records her feelings on the occasion. "Time, though it has tranquillized our spirits, has not lightened the feeling of our irreparable loss. Whether we consider the bereaved prince or the country, the calamity is unspeakably great. I cannot help considering the event as a frowning providence. Why do we slide so much from our daily and hourly dependence upon God? Why were no prayers offered up for this sweet princess? Why was the abundant harvest, (a blessing as unexpected as it was undeserved,) never acknowledged—at least in our churches? Why are our public recognitions of Divine mercy so much less frequent, as well as less fervent, than those of the northern states? I sometimes lay this flattering unction to my soul, that perhaps we feel more than we say, and they say more than they feel."

Mrs. More was requested about this time, to make such corrections she might think desirable in her 'Cœlebs,' and in her 'Practical Piety,' the fifteenth edition of the former, and the eleventh of the latter, being then going to press. Her remarks on the occasion show how vigilantly she still inspected

her motives. "I have lately been called upon for a corrected copy of two of my works, new editions of which are called for. In spite of the dull task of reforming points and particles, I found the revisal of 'Practical Piety,' especially, a salutary and mortifying employment. How easy is it to be good upon paper! I felt myself humbled even to a sense of hypocrisy to observe, (for I had forgotten the book,) how very far short I had myself fallen of the habits and principles, and interior sanctity, which I had found it so easy to recommend to others. I hardly read a page which did not carry some reproach to my own heart."

Barley Wood, though death had stripped it of some of its attractions, continued to be a favourite spot, with all who took a lively interest in diffusing religious knowledge. During the autumn of this year, Mrs. More had the high gratification to entertain Dr. Chalmers, the eloquent champion of Christianity; and Drs. Patterson and Henderson, the Bible Missionaries. From the latter distinguished individuals, who had taken a different course in pursuit of the same great object, she had the high satisfaction to learn, that many of her works were not only read in England, but were almost equally popular in the districts through which they had travelled. In Russia, Dr. Patterson assured her that she had been productive of much good. Dr. Henderson stated, that he met with several copies of her 'Practical Piety' in Sweden, where the work was highly valued. In passing through Ireland, he found that both that and 'Cœlebs' were read there, with great interest and evident advantage. Information like this must have been most encouraging and pleasing to one, who, like Mrs. More, wrote not to obtain popularity, but to advance the cause of practical piety.

But these were not the only testimonials she re-

ceived of the increasing popularity and usefulness of her publications. Her ' Cœlebs,' she was informed, had been translated into French, and, contrary to her expectation, had been favourably noticed by several distinguished French critics. She had also the happiness to receive a letter from the Religious Tract Society in Paris, requesting permission to translate and print her tracts, not for the poor, but for the higher classes. To this she cheerfully consented; suggesting, at the same time, whether it would not be advisable to select some chapters of ' Practical Piety' for the same purpose. She received a letter from a Russian Princess, expressing deep personal obligations for her works, and informing her that she had herself translated some of them into the Russian language, and that they had been productive of the happiest results. Nor was this all; she had the pleasure to learn that Sir Alexander Johnstone, chief justice of Ceylon, a most enlightened magistrate, the friend of Christian missions, had caused several of her publications to be translated into Cingalese, and that they were read by the natives very extensively.

It was chiefly owing to the exertions of Sir Alexander Johnstone that the enactment was made, which led gradually to the entire extinction of slavery in that island. At the same time, it was resolved, that the natives should annually, on that day, commemorate the joyful event; and Mrs. More was respectfully requested, by some of her friends, to compose some lines to be sung by them on the occasion. With this request she cheerfully complied, so much was it in unison with her own feelings. The interesting poetic dialogue she composed was very appropriate and pleasing. It was a dramatic balad, and was entitled ' The Feast of Freedom.' It was subsequently translated into Cingalese, by two Cingalese priests, who had accompanied Sir Alexander Johnstone on his voyage to England, whither he was

compelled to return in 1818, on account of his own and Lady Johnstone's health. From this gentleman Mrs. More had the pleasure to receive some lithographic Cingalese copies of her ballad, together with several interesting transcripts made by the natives, in proof of the high veneration in which they held her works. One of these, was the whole of one of her 'Sacred Dramas,' neatly written by a native of Ceylon, in Cingalese, on palm-leaves, the cover of which was beautifully painted and enriched.

Sir Alexander Johnstone, with the two Cingalese priests, paid her a visit at Barley Wood, soon after their arrival in England, and the interview afforded her great pleasure. Their united testimonial to the utility of her works in Ceylon, was most pleasing, and was gratefully acknowledged by her, as an encouraging proof that God had not suffered her to labour in vain. Nor was she without encouraging prospects, that, in future, the productions of her pen might become even still more extensively useful. The two Persian noblemen, who at that time had visited England, to acquire a knowledge of its literature, and of European arts and sciences, had been introduced by some friend to Mrs. More, at Barley Wood; and so much were they delighted with the kind reception they met with, that the more intelligent and best-informed one of the two, solicited Mrs. More to present him with some trifling relics, which might serve as a memento of her kindness. Imagining that it might probably be useful, she presented him a copy of her 'Practical Piety.' He received it politely and gratefully, and assured her it should be the first work he would translate into Persian on his return. Thus had she encouraging grounds to hope that this valuable work might in future, through the Divine blessing, become useful in a far distant country.

In September of this year, (1818), both Mrs. More and her sister were suddenly attacked with a

fever, which, for some days, threatened serious results, but from which they gradually recovered. It was chiefly owing to the excitement induced by too many visitors during the summer, many of them strangers and persons of distinction from other countries. An attack of illness at her advanced age, might be supposed to have enfeebled her mental vigour. But, on her recovery, it appears not to have had this effect in the slightest degree. In an interesting letter to Mr. Knox, written before she had quite recovered her health, some remarks are made, which show that the vigour of her conceptions had suffered no diminution. "I agree with you, my dear sir, that the Epistle of St. James has left a subject for a fine practical commentary. Why do not you take it up yourself? It is worthy of you, and would be peculiarly in your own way. You would not only treat it morally, but holily. I want to see St. Peter also taken up in a new way. It may sound odd to use that term, but I cannot help calling his a character almost dramatic; his warm affections, his undoubted confidence, his repeated falls, his sincere repentance, the forwardness of his feelings, the failure of his resolutions, the inconceivably piercing look cast upon him by his Divine Master, the consolatory message, sent not to the beloved John, but to the swearing, protesting *denier*, the "Go tell Peter"—how touching are all these particulars!"

Her correspondence at this period afford additional proof that declining years had produced in her no abatement of mental vigour; she wrote with all her accustomed vivacity. Her letters were the unpremeditated pourings forth of a full and vigorous mind; and it would be easy to select from them passages, in which important truths are conveyed in a style at once the most natural and elegant, illustrative alike of her judgment and of her discrimination. "Talents," she remarks in one place, "are a fine

thing, when they are not the best thing a man has; but when put in the balance with Christian principles, they kick the beam. This truth, perhaps, will not be generally felt or acknowledged in this world; but if not confessed on the dying bed, it will be loudly proclaimed at the day of judgment, to many the great day of dread, decision, and despair." In another letter she remarks, incidentally: "To me it appears that the two great classes into which the world is divided, the wicked and the righteous, are more decided now than they ever were; the bad seems to be worse, and the good better. The best, however, have need enough for *watchfulness* and *humility*. These appear to me the two characteristics of the decided Christian. Watch and pray are two monosyllables which easily slip off the tongue, and yet they contain the great rule of Christianity, as given by its great Author."

Alluding, in one of her letters, to the philanthropic exertions of the excellent and indefatigable Mrs. Fry, to whom she had presented a copy of some of her works, she acutely remarks: "I am glad Mrs. F. liked her present. Her exertions have struck me forcibly, as a proof how the Almighty chooses his instruments—such, perhaps, as our short-sighted wisdom would not have selected. None but a woman, and none but a woman of that society to which she belongs, could have ventured, or, if ventured, could have succeeded. Their habits of public speaking have taken away that fear of men which would have intimidated one of us, even if we had more zeal and piety than are commonly found among us. Besides which, they are aided by a practical, conscientious conviction, that the Holy Spirit instantaneously suggests what they shall say. Again, had you, or I, or any churchwoman, possessed the heroic piety of Mrs. Fry, what a cry would have been raised against us. To be branded as an enthu-

siast and a fanatic, would have been the reward of our endeavours. Not all the sobriety of mind and soundness of judgment which this good lady has shown, would have been of any avail in our case; so that we see how admirably God fits the instrument to the work."

The state of Mrs. More's mind at the close of 1818 shows that the events and occurrences of the year, had not been allowed to pass unimproved. The affliction she had endured, while it had not abated her mental vigour, had gradually detached her from the world, and augmented considerably her devotional fervour. "My whole life," she piously and gratefully writes, "has been a successsive scene of visitation and restoration. I think I could enumerate twenty mortal diseases, from which I have been raised up, without any consequent diminution of strength, except in an illness which happened to me ten years ago, and which continued for nearly two years. Yet let me gratefully remember this; that at nearly sixty, after this hopeless disease, I was restored to sufficient physical strength to write ten volumes—such as they are. I remember, that in that long affliction, though at one time I seldom closed my eyes in sleep for forty days and forty nights, yet I had never one hour's great discomposure of mind, or one moment's failure of reason, though I was always liable to agitation. I repeat these mercies to you, in order to impress them on myself as motives of never-ceasing gratitude, to that merciful and long-suffering Father, to whom I have made such unworthy returns."

Nothing afforded Mrs. More greater pleasure, than to witness, as she increased in years, the vigorous efforts made by Christians, not in a spirit of jealous rivalry, but of holy and Christian zeal, to diffuse Christian principles. In the success of the various societies formed for that purpose, she ever took a

lively interest. And though her deepest concern was of course for the prosperity and extension of that Church of which she was conscientiously a most decided member; yet she ever seemed to feel as if, with St. Paul, she could exclaim, "What then, notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached—and I therein do rejoice, yea and will rejoice." In one of her letters she says, "I have regretted, foolishly enough, that some of my earliest and dearest friends did not live to promote, and rejoice in the wonderful prosperity of such of our religious institutions as each particularly delighted in. Dean Tucker, Dr. Kennicott, and Bishop Horne would have been among the most zealous supporters of the conversion of the Jews; as Dr. Johnson would of the Slave-abolition, and the Bible and Missionary Societies. Bishop Porteus would have rejoiced in the prosperity of all, as would dear Venn and H. Thornton. To descend to so poor a thing as myself and my writings; the gratification I feel in that measure of success, which it has pleased God to grant unworthy me, when so many abler and better persons have been neglected, is much diminished by the loss of all the above-named, and many others, who would have taken a warmer interest in what concerned me than it deserved, and that from partial kindness; but all this is necessary and salutary and right."

But the interest taken by Mrs. More in the diffusion of religious knowledge generally, did not, as there is reason to fear is the case sometimes, diminish in any degree her active endeavours to enlighten the poor in her own neighbourhood. To promote the prosperity of her schools, she was increasingly anxious; and though she could not give, so frequently as formerly, her personal superintendence, yet was she equally concerned for their welfare.

She had lived long enough to witness many most pleasing proofs of their happy results. About this time she gratefully records the following happy instances of good that had been done: "We have many substantial comforts. Two of our first scholars at Cheddar, whom we taught their letters thirty years ago, died last week. They became remarkably pious, when they were only fourteen years of age. I went to see them a short time before their decease. One of them had married a school-boy of ours, who became a good tradesman; and they had prospered in life. I never attended a more edifying death-bed. Though suffering much from her maladies, yet she discovered something more than resignation; it was a sort of humble, grateful triumph. She was obliged to pray against impatience for death; so ardent was her desire to be with her Saviour. O how I envied her! There was no heated imagination. She was happy on good grounds."

How pleasing an instance is this of the happy effects of youthful piety! What encouragement does it afford to foster every good impression made on the youthful mind! Christians generally attach too little importance to serious impressions made in early life, which are often thereby rendered ineffective. This is frequently done under the delusive and dangerous notion, that piety and cheerful vivacity cannot co-exist. A notion most false and utterly at variance with the inspired records. "Happy is the man," we are there assured, "that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all that thou canst desire, are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness,

and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her."

Mrs. More's remarks, in describing the death-bed of these individuals, shows, that with her increasing years she felt an increasing desire to live in the enjoyment of that religion which alone can furnish an antidote to the fear of death, while it fills the soul with happiness in the prospect of eternity. This she well knew, that nothing short of the Gospel, cordially embraced, could ever effectually accomplish. She had seen many cases in which it had had this effect, and she shrunk not, when duty called upon her to visit the dying-bed. Painful as it was to witness the sufferings of expiring nature, yet she felt it to be salutary to her heart, and had ever experienced it to be most true, as the poet sings, that

> "The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
> Is privileg'd beyond the common walks
> Of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven."

The lessons to be learnt from a death-bed, are as useful as they are serious and affecting. It is well to put our piety to the test of visiting such scenes occasionally. If it will not sustain this trial, it behoves us to inquire whether it be not seriously defective. If it will not enable us to look upon death, how will it support us under its attack. That is the religion we should earnestly seek, which will sustain us amidst the difficulties of life, and while it inspires us with a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, will reconcile us to our continuance in life, and excite active zeal in promoting His glory till he shall summon us to our final account.

CHAPTER XVII.

Commences writing her 'Moral Sketches'—Motives for composing it—Its publication—Remarks on its merits—On the illustration it affords of her prevailing habits—Patriotism—Concern for the young—Increasing dislike of worldly conformity—Love of sincerity—Union of devotion with active Christian exertion—Aversion to vanity—Death of her only surviving sister—Deep regret for the loss—Reflections—Christian submission—Brief sketch of Mrs. Martha More's character.

After the attack of illness which Mrs. More had suffered in the autumn of 1818, she enjoyed a season of retirement for many months, less interrupted by visitors than on almost any former occasion. At her advanced age, and with her feeble remnants of strength, though her mind still retained all its vigour, it might have been expected that she would gladly have made this a season of entire relaxation. This seemed, indeed, to have been her intention, as she had determined not to write again for the press. An intention by which she would probably have abided, had her mind been less active, or her disposition less benevolent. She had, however, so long accustomed herself to study, not her own convenience, but the public good, that from habit as well as from inclination she could not forbear still to take a lively interest in public affairs; and as she saw many evils were then becoming alarmingly prevalent, she deter-

mined once more to employ her pen in defence of truth and virtue.

Her reasons for so doing, she thus playfully describes: "The newspapers will have told you why, and I am sorry you should learn it from them before you heard it from me, that I have been guilty of the weakness of my age, of doing that imprudent and presumptuous thing, writing a book. I had fully resolved, as became me, to commit no more indiscretions of this sort, but I have broken, as did not become me, my resolution. Though living in retirement, I find there is a fresh crop of errors springing up in a quarter where we did not much look for them; namely, among the religious, or the professing part of the world. Mine is a book, which in addition to its being feebly written, will bring me no small discredit, as well with the grave as the gay. For one part of it I expect to have the whole fashionable world, at least all that part of it who look into a grave book, falling upon me without mercy: but I cannot help it. I have really seen and heard so much of the evils arising, and likely to arise, from the epidemic French mania, that while I was musing, the fire burned, and at last I spoke with my pen. You will, I fear, think I have been too strong; but when I saw the country almost abandoned, in this second assault upon its safety, and millions spent abroad while our poor are perishing at home, I could not restrain my feelings. This foolish book has so engaged me, that the last volume of 'Clark's Travels,' 'The Voyage to Ashantee,' and 'Chalmers' Sermons' all lie on my table uncut. I wish I had thought of it sooner, for this is a wretched time of the year to bring it out, for I suppose the town is empty. But I may not live another year, so I prefer publishing it with all its faults."

This work was commenced early in 1819, and published in the ensuing summer. It was first intended

only to be a pamphlet, but when completed, it formed a good-sized volume. The whole of the first edition was taken off on the day of publication, and it afterwards had a very extensive sale. It is of a more miscellaneous character than any of Mrs. More's former productions, though it is, perhaps, fully equal to any of its predecessors, except her 'Essay on the Character of St. Paul,' which is decidedly her master-piece. Throughout the volume, there is the same high tone of Christian morals; the same steady and uniform attachment to the great leading truths of Christianity; the same masterly exposure of the evils arising from an ostentatious, hypocritical profession of piety; and the same fearless fidelity, in exposing the follies of the great. In a lucid and bold statement of Christian truth, the work is not inferior to any former production; though, in the opinion of some, it would have been improved, had it contained a more full and direct statement of the doctrines of grace, and of the great sacrifice offered up by the Redeemer, with a more distinct reference to the mighty influence of the Spirit as the source of all real virtue. The excellencies of the volume are well summed up, at the close of an interesting letter to Mrs. More, from the Rev. Daniel Wilson, now Lord Bishop of Calcutta. "The scrutiny into the heart; the details of practical duty; the detection of prevalent disorders; and, in fine, the new and excellent observations on the tendency and development of religious principle, all founded on the characteristic doctrines of Christianity, stamp a high value upon the work, and must, under the Divine blessing, cause it to be productive of much good."

It must, however, be acknowledged, that this work has defects, which if not peculiar to itself, are less obvious in Mrs. More's former volumes. It was evidently composed too hastily. More deliberation would have led to the suppression of some apparent

tautology, and to its improvement in other respects. It was well remarked, by an able and candid critic, that "The absence of method in the work, makes one conscious of no progression to any object, and the want of unity produces on the mind an effect not unlike that which results from the performance, in rapid succession, of several excellent musicians, in various styles and of nearly equal merit. Not that there is in the work any obscurity, either in style or in tendency, but simply that the miscellaneous character of its contents, and the almost unavoidable repetitions which occur, where a consecutive course of reasoning and illustration is not preserved, makes us regret that so many good materials should not have been re-added with more accuracy of system, and a better adjustment of parts. We could, indeed, wish, either that the work had been more miscellaneous or more methodical. It too much resembles a copious transcription from notes and memoranda. Many of the articles are too similar to have entitled them to come forth as distinct, and yet too feebly connected in thinking to have justified their division into separate essays." These remarks were not made in an unkind or uncandid spirit; far from it. The same writer observes, acutely: "In perusing this volume, we felt as if we had been admitted to view the sketch-book of some eminent artist, after passing through a long gallery of the most finished productions. In such a case, we could not but survey, even the sketches, with a general recollection of the skill and excellence of the colouring, and the art and taste of the finishing. We could not fail, by the help of imagination, to supply to such sketches all that we know the artist could effect, to render them worthy of a place by the side of her own most select works. In short, we are reluctant to admit the propriety of the modest title affixed to this volume, for there are passages which display the most acute ob-

servation of human nature, with the greatest accuracy in the delineation of character."

It is, however, the illustration which this work affords us of Mrs. More's mind and character at the time of composing it, as it may be inferred, by its statements, that chiefly require the biographer's attention: none can read the opening chapters without admiring the noble public spirit displayed. It is clearly seen, that Mrs. More was no unobservant spectator of what was passing around her, but that she deeply interested herself in every thing that was likely to effect the welfare of her country. Conceiving that the nature and obligations of patriotism were then in danger of being overlooked by the public, deeply to the injury of the national interests, and not less unbeneficial to the national character, she raised her voice to remedy the evil, with an eloquence and a force that would have conferred honour on an able enlightened statesman in the vigour of life, from whom it might rather have been expected to come, than from a lady, at her then advanced age. But she evidently always gloried in being an Englishwoman: her entire character was English: she had ever been the sturdy defender of English manners, and could say, with the warmest feelings of her heart,—

"England, with all thy faults, I love thee still!"

The British constitution she held in high admiration, and even to this advanced period of life, she nobly repulsed the attacks of its enemies, and fearlessly exposed the innovations which she thought likely to impair its vigour.

It is erroneously imagined by some, that Christian piety and patriotism cannot co-exist; but, in the instance of Mrs. More, we see them happily united; and we trust the truth is daily gaining ground, that the individual who does not love and fear his God, cannot really, from justifiable motives, love his coun-

try. Christianity, cordially embraced, and practically illustrated, though it chiefly fits us for the citizenship of heaven, neither forbids us to love our country, nor disqualifies us for making active patriotic efforts to promote its welfare. In all Mrs. More's remarks, to check the rage for French emigration, which then prevailed, it will be seen, that she viewed the matter in its moral and religious, as well as in its political aspects. Piety and patriotism were finely blended in this, and, indeed, in almost all her productions. The following remarks, at the close of the preface, afford an interesting illustration of its operations. "At her advanced age," she remarks, "the writer has little to hope from praise, or to fear from censure, except as her views may have been in a right or a wrong direction: she has felt, that the exposure of growing errors is a duty devolving on those who have the good of mankind at heart:—the more nearly her time approaches for leaving the world, there is a sense in which she feels herself more interested in it; she means, in an increasing anxiety for its advancement in all that is right in principle, and virtuous in action: and as the events and experience of every day convince her, that there is no true virtue which is not founded on religion, and no true religion which is not maintained by PRAYER, she hopes to be forgiven, if, with declining years and faculties, yet, with increasing earnestness, from an increasing conviction of its value, she once more ventures to impress this important topic on their attention." Adverting to the subject again in her opening chapter, after a powerful enumeration of the evils likely to arise from the contagious example of French impiety, she adds: "Our palladium is the *Christian*, the *Protestant religion;* it cannot be taken from us by storm, but may by stratagem: while it remains as our guardian genius, inclosed within our walls, we shall be safe, in spite of wars and revolutions: if we

neglect it, we fall: losing our religion, we lose our all. Religion is our compass; the only instrument for directing and determining our course; and though it will not save the trouble of working the vessel, nor diminish the vigilance of guarding against rocks and shoals, yet it constantly points to that star, which, by ascertaining our course, insures our safety."

The chapter in this work, entitled 'England's best Hope,' affords a fine illustration of the value which its author still attached to a Christian education: her attention to this important subject during the whole of her long life, and her experience with it in all its bearings, entitle her remarks to the most respectful attention: it had always been her favourite subject, but she had hitherto chiefly confined her remarks to female education. In this chapter, she enforces, with an eloquence almost irresistible, the importance, as our best national safeguard, of giving, to the male branches of the higher and more influential families, not only a liberal, but a Christian education. "Why," she asks, "should not Christian instruction be made a prominent article in the education of those who are to govern and legislate, as well as those who are to work and serve? Why are these most important beings, the very beings, in this enlightened country, whose immortal interests are the most neglected? Parents are grieved at the indications of evil dispositions in their children, yet they study not the human character, but credulously believe, that the accidental defect and the budding vice; time will cure; forgetting, that time itself cures nothing, but only inveterates and exasperates, where religion is not allowed to operate as a corrective. Gentlemen should be scholars: liberal learning need not interfere with religious acquirements, unless it be so conducted as to make religion an object of inferior regard: but no human learning ought to keep religion in the back-ground, so as to render it an in-

cidental or subordinate part in the education of a Christian gentleman."

To these remarks, on a subject at all times of paramount importance, we cannot forbear to subjoin the following serious and striking observations, both as a specimen of the interesting style in which this volume is penned, and as an additional proof of her increasing earnestness to make her productions the means of doing public good. "If every English gentleman did but seriously reflect, how much the future moral prosperity of his country depended on the education he may at this moment be giving to his son, even if his paternal feelings did not stimulate him to zealous endeavours to impart to his offspring sound religious knowledge, his patriotism would. May the unworthy writer, who loves her country with an ardour which the superior worth of that country justifies; who, during a long life, has anxiously watched its alternations of prosperous and adverse fortune, and who, on the very verge of eternity, is proportionally anxious for its moral prosperity, as she approaches nearer to that state, in view of which all temporal considerations diminish in their value, may she hope, that her egotism will be forgiven, and her pardon obtained, for the liberty she is taking? May she venture to suppose herself now conversing with some respectable father of a family in the higer ranks of life, who permits her freely to address him, and through him every man of rank and fortune in the kingdom, in plain, but bold language, with something like the following suggestions? Let it be your principal concern to train up your son in the fear of God. Make this fear, which is the beginning of wisdom in point of excellence, the same also in priority of time. Let the beginning of wisdom be made the beginning of education. Imbue the youthful mind betimes with correct tastes, and sound principles, good affections and right habits. Consider that the tastes,

principles, affections, and habits he now forms, are to be the elements of his future character, the fountain of honourable actions, the germ of whatever may hereafter be pure, virtuous, and of good report. In his education, never lose sight of this great truth, that irreligion is death to all that is graceful and amiable in the human mind; the destruction of all moral beauty. The foundations of irreligion are in the dust, and it is a vain attempt to hope to raise a noble superstructure on so mean and despicable a basis. Tell him that the irreligious man never looks out of self. He is his own centre: all his views are low. He has no conception of any thing that is lofty in virtue, or sublime in feeling. How should he? He does not look to God as the only model of perfection. He will perform nothing that is holy, for he does not honour his commands; he will conceive nothing that is great, for he never looks to the only archytype of greatness; there is no true grandeur in his soul. His mind will be reduced to the narrowness of the things to which he is familiarized, and stoop to the littleness of the objects about which it is conversant. His views will not be noble, because they are not excursive, they are confined, imprisoned, limited, entangled in earth and its concerns: they never expatiate in the boundless regions of immortality: his soul is cramped in the exercise of all its noblest faculties: there is no true elevation of mind, but what he must acquire by the knowledge of God as revealed in his word; no perfect example, but that exhibited to him in the character of his Divine Son. Nothing but the gospel, through the grace of God, will check his corruptions, give him a sense of his accountability, and raise his nature above the degraded state to which sin has reduced it. Let him be made familiarly acquainted with God's word, his providence, his controlling power, his superintending eye: let him be taught, not barely to read,

but to understand, to love, to venerate his Bible. Implant, at a proper season, the evidences of Christianity in the clearest, simplest and most explicit manner. Furnish him with arguments to defend it when he hears it attacked. Teach him to despise ridicule. Guard him against false, sordid, but popular worldly maxims. Tell him, that even his thoughts are not free, but that he must endeavour to bring them to the same correct standard with his actions, from the same awful motives: 'Thou, God, seest me.' That nothing which he possesses is his own, but belongs to God. That to resent an injury is a direct violation of the Divine command."

Ample proof is given in this volume of Mrs. More's aversion both to worldly conformity, and to mere formal religion. Her keen insight into character enabled her to discover, that a worldly heart was not unfrequently concealed beneath the show of much external piety. A pleasing exterior she saw, with regret, was often mistaken for religion. Against this dangerous delusion she was most anxious to raise her warning voice. "Be assured," she writes, "that whatever serves to keep the heart from God, is one and the same spirit of irreligion, whether it appears in the shape of coarse vice or of decorum and the blandishments of polished life. Courteousness, unaccompanied by principle, will stand the most courteous in no stead with Him who is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Forget not, that the foremost and most brilliant creature, with the most engaging manners, and the most accomplished mind, stands in the same need of repentance, forsaking of sin, redemption by the Son of God, and renovation by his Spirit, as the least attractive. The more engaging the manners, and the more interesting the acquirements, the more is it to be lamented, that those very attractions, by your

complacency in them, may have stood between you and heaven. Bear, then, in mind, that you may be pleasing to others while you have an unsanctified heart; that politeness, though it may put on the appearance of humility, is but a poor imitation of that prime grace; that good breeding, though the beautiful decoration of a pious mind, is but a wretched substitution for the want of it. Be assured, however, that true religion will in nowise diminish your natural or acquired graces; but they will be the more admired, when they are known not to be the best things you have. Remember that Christianity will not change its character, or lower its requirements, or make the strait gate wider, or the narrow way broader, or hold out false colours to induce you to embrace it. It is not that easy, superficial thing which some suppose, requiring little more than a ceremonious attendance on its forms, and a freedom from the gross violation of its commands. This may be nominal, but it is not saving Christianity. It is not that spiritual, yet practical religion for which the Son of God endured the cross, that he might establish it in the hearts of his followers. He did not suffer, that his children might be excused from self-denial. But Christianity, though a self-denying principle, yet denies you nothing which even now adds to your real happiness. It only disenchants you from an illusion, and gives you substantial peace in exchange. It will take from you nothing which good sense and reason do not condemn. Labour not to reconcile two interests, which must ever remain irreconcileable. The single eye cannot be fixed on two objects at once. A life governed by Christianity differs in every thing from a worldly system. It is free from the turbulence, and the agitation of its pursuits. It has none of the anxieties and jealousies of its competitions; consequently none of the vexation of its disappoint-

ing results. The further you proceed in the paths of pleasantness, the pleasanter they become. Its difficulties diminish, its delights increase. It has pleasures of its own, satisfactions which depend not on human admiration, but on his favour, whom to know is eternal life."

None rejoiced more sincerely than Mrs. More in the formation of the different religious societies which began about that time to be extensively patronized. In many parts of her 'Moral Sketches,' she mentions it as a subject that called aloud for gratitude. Yet it is easy to perceive that she entertained serious apprehensions, lest public efforts to promote the spread of piety should induce some to undervalue the private, but not less important duties of religion, which her knowledge of human nature taught her was far from being improbable. Not that she had the least desire to check, or to do any thing that would diminish the benevolent efforts to diffuse religion, which were then making; she was only anxious that personal piety should keep pace with these public efforts. To further this desirable object, and to show the important advantages arising from a devotional habit, was evidently her design in composing the 'Reflections on Prayer,' which form considerably more than one third (and by far the most useful part) of her 'Moral Sketches.' In this part of the volume, many most interesting and profitable remarks are made on the nature of prayer, its obligations, the great encouragements held out to engage in it; the folly of all excuses for its neglect, the certain benefits it confers, and the impossibility of maintaining a course of consistent piety without it. In the chapter on 'the Praying Christian in the World,' and in all those passages throughout the volume where she points out the characteristics of true piety, Mrs. More does, in fact, though undesignedly, delineate the features of her

own character, or, at least, what she was aiming to be. So far as circumstances would permit, she was herself an example of that fine union of public activity and private devotion, which, in the following extract, she insists upon as indispensably necessary in the truly pious. "As soon as religion is really become the earnest desire of our hearts, it will inevitably become the great business of our lives. They little advance the interests of mankind, who, under the powerful plea of what great things God has done for us, in our redemption by his Son, neglect to encourage our active services in his cause. Hear the words of inspiration: 'Be not slothful—run the race—fight the good fight—strive to enter in—give diligence—work out your own salvation.' Is it not obvious that the Holy Spirit, who dictated these words, clearly meant that a sound faith in the word of God was intended to produce holy exertion in his cause? Even the Redeemer's activity was not exceeded by his devotion, and both gloriously illustrated his doctrines. Until, then, we make our religion a part of our common life, until we bring it from its retreat, to live in the world, it will not have accomplished what it was sent on earth to do. We do not mean the introduction of its language, but its spirit. The temper which it is the object of prayer to communicate, should be kept alive in society, and brought into action in its affairs. That the integrity, the veracity, the justice, the purity, the liberality, the watchfulness over ourselves, the candour towards others, all exercised by the fear of the Lord, and strengthened by the word of God and prayer, should be brought from the retirement of devotion to the regulation of the conduct. Prayer makes not the whole of the Christian life; it is only the operating principle, which sets the machine in motion. It is the sharpest spur to virtuous action, but not the act itself; the only infallible incentive

to a useful life, but not a substitute for that usefulness. Religion keeps her children in full employment. The praying Christian, on going into the world, finds that his social and religious duties are happily comprised in one brief sentence—'I will think upon thy commandments to do them.' Though procrastination is treated by many as a light evil, he studiously avoids it. Abroad, how many duties meet him—at home, he has a family to watch over; he finds work for every faculty of his understanding and every affection of his heart. He wants to watch as well as to pray, that his conscience be not darkened by prejudice, that his bad qualities do not assume the shape of virtues, nor his good ones engender self-applause; that his best intentions do not mislead his judgment, that his candour do not degenerate into indifference, nor his strictness into bigotry; that his moderation do not freeze, nor his zeal burn. He has, in fact, to watch against a long list of sins, errors and temptations, which he will find heavier in weight and more in number the more closely he examines them."

The above accurate delineation of the Christian, is alike illustrative of the descriptive power of Mrs. More's pen and of the goodness of her heart. Her extensive scriptural knowledge, acquired by long-continued, patient study of the sacred volume; her acute penetration and minute acquaintance with the workings of the human heart; her daily self-inspection, and the observation of others for a long series of years, had enabled her to draw that picture of Christian excellence in its just and beautiful proportions, which it was the anxious endeavour of her life to resemble.

The vigilant self-inspection she still cultivated may be inferred from the following searching remarks:—"The praying Christian has to watch especially against the fear of man; and even should he have

conquered in a good degree this temptation, he may still find a more dangerous enemy in worldly applause, than he found in its enmity. He has observed that many amiable, and even pious persons, who have got above the more vulgar allurements of the world, who have surmounted all the temptations of a mere sensual kind, who are no longer subdued by its softening luxuries, its seducing pleasures, its dazzling splendours, nor its captivating amusements, have yet become entangled by the keen desire to obtain its good opinion. Anxiety for worldly applause ensnares many, who are got above anything else the world has to offer. This is, perhaps, the last, lingering sin, which cleaves even to those who have made a considerable progress in religion, the still unextinguished passion of a mind great enough to have subdued many other passions. The Christian does not fear vanity as he fears any other single vice, but he regards it as an enemy against which he must ever be on the watch, an evil which, if indulged, will poison all his virtues. When he hears it said of any religious character, 'He is a good man, but he is vain,' he says within himself, 'He is vain, and, therefore, I fear he is not good.' Every suspicion of the first emotions of vanity in himself, sends the Christian with deep prostration before his Maker. Lord, what is man! shall the praise of a fellow-mortal, whose breath is in his nostrils, whose ashes must soon be mingled with my own, which may, even before my own, be consigned to kindred dust—shall his praise be of sufficient potency to endanger the humility of a being, who is not only looking forward to the applause of those glorious spirits which surround the throne of God, but to the approbation of God himself."

These remarks, had they been made by a mere sentimentalist, or by one whose ambition had been mortified by repeated, yet fruitless efforts to be-

come popular, though valuable in themselves, would not have merited particular notice. But coming from the pen of Mrs. More, who enjoyed far greater popularity than often falls to the lot of an individual, they afford additional proof how closely she inspected the movements of her mind, and how vigilantly she guarded against whatever seemed likely to diminish or enfeeble her piety. She had her secret struggles, and frequent internal conflicts, but she sought relief from the only safe Physician, from whom no one ever sought it in vain.

The ' Moral Sketches' had scarcely issued from the press, whe ann event occurred, of a more distressing character than any Mrs. More had yet experienced: this was the sudden death of her only surviving sister, Mrs. Martha More, who, from the earliest commencement of her village labours, had been her faithful companion and zealous coadjutor. The Wilberforces were on a visit at Barley Wood at the time this melancholy event occurred, and by their Christian sympathy supported the disconsolate survivor, who was at the time confined to her bed by a severe attack of illness, and who, but for their kind aid, would have almost sunk under the stroke. The ardent zeal with which the deceased had always carried all Mrs. More's village plans of usefulness into effect, and the kind Christian feeling she had invariably manifested, made the loss to the survivor irreparable. She felt it most keenly, yet was she not unsubmissive. She mourned much over her loss, but not as one without hope, well knowing that her loss was her sister's immense gain.

Such, however, were its effects, that it was a considerable time before Mrs. More could divert her thoughts into another channel. For weeks her correspondence was entirely suspended, though, during this interval, she received a number of most inte-

resting letters, commendatory of her 'Moral Sketches,' and congratulating her on the service she had done to the cause of piety by the publication. But, though all her correspondents expressed the tenderest sympathy for her bereavement, yet could she not be prevailed upon to reply to any, till the number of her letters had accumulated so as to make it a hopeless task. In her first letter after the event, written some weeks subsequent to her sister's decease, so poignant was her grief, that she wrote as if the loss had only just occurred. "I need not tell you that my grief is exquisite; but my consolations are great, and I trust that not one rebellious thought has risen in my heart. On the contrary, I enumerate my many mercies—that she was spared to me so long; that she had been in such a constant state of preparation; that my grief is not aggravated by any doubt of her present happiness; that she has gained much more than I have lost, and that she is exempt from the sorrows I now feel. Never was a private individual's death more lamented. Four or five funeral sermons were preached on the mournful occasion. There was not a dry eye in the churches. O pray for me, that this affliction may quicken me in my spiritual course."

To another correspondent she adverts in the same plaintive, yet submissive tone, to the separation; proving that, much as she mourned over her loss, yet she murmured not, but calmly surrendered her will to God's. "I may, indeed, now say," she writes, "my house is left unto me desolate; but I bless my heavenly Father, that he has not left me without consolation and support. And when I reflect on my sister's immense gain, I am ashamed to dwell so much on my own loss. You knew her well, and knew how much she deserved to be loved, and how much she must necessarily be

lamented. In my affliction, I endeavour to keep my mercies before my eyes: I find not one reason for murmurs, but many for thanksgiving. She was enabled, after a life of devotedness to God, to bear her dying testimony to his faithfulness and truth. I feel thankful that she is removed from a world of pain and suffering, of sin and sorrow, to that blessed state purchased for her, by one who loved her, and gave himself for her, and that she sleeps with Jesus. Her last words were expressive of her strong Christian hope. She repeatedly renounced all dependence on herself or her works, and declared she looked for salvation only to a crucified Saviour. On one occasion, a little before her departure, when a friend was pitying her for the excruciating pain she was suffering, she exclaimed, 'Oh, I love my sufferings; they come from God, and I love every thing that comes from him!' Shall I mourn for such a death? Indeed, I cannot but deeply. The remainder of my pilgrimage, however, must be short: I pray that I may be enabled to spend the future portion of my life better than I have done the past. She was taken from me, I believe, to quicken my repentance and preparation. My chief earthly support was removed, that I might lean more entirely on God."

Some will, perhaps, think, that Mrs. More allowed her mind to be too much depressed by this mournful event, and that she did not, herself, exercise that submission to the Divine will, which is so essential a part of Christian duty, and which, in her writings, she had so ably recommended to others. It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that, to those who are not fully aware of the great loss she had sustained, she will appear to have indulged in sorrow that might almost be called immoderate: but the removal of her sister, who had always taken upon her the entire management of Mrs. More's domestic

affairs, had thrown so great an additional burden upon her, that she could not avoid feeling the deepest regret. The severity of this sorrow, as might be expected, issued at length in her increased indisposition, and led to a renewed attack of illness, so severe, that she was compelled to keep her room for some weeks. Almost the first effort of her pen, on becoming convalescent, was to write a reply to a most kind letter she had received from the Rev. D. Wilson, the present Bishop of Calcutta, sympathizing with her under her loss. "I have been prevented, by sufferings of body and mind, from thanking you before for your kind letter: the former, I am willing to hope, has been the chief aggressor, for this corruptible body presseth down the soul. I am, however, a little better in both respects, partly owing, perhaps, to the prayers of the multitude of Christians who have sympathized in my sorrows in no common degree. I do not undervalue the kindness of human comforters, especially as they bear testimony to the value of what I have lost; for this pious sympathy is put into their hearts by Him who is himself the only source of substantial consolation, and who has mercifully supported me under the heaviest trial which remained for me: mine is simple unmixed grief, not tinctured with any doubt or fear for the present state of my beloved sister, who was enabled to bear her dying testimony to the faithfulness of her God and Saviour. I have lost my chief earthly comfort, companion, counsellor and fellow-labourer. God doubtless saw that I leaned too much on this weak prop, and therefore in mercy withdrew it, that I might depend more exclusively on himself. I can truly say, that my sorrow has not been mixed with one murmuring thought. I kiss the rod, and adore the hand that employs it: nor do I think so much of my loss, as of the mercies which accompany it:—I bless God that she was spared

to me so long; that her last trial, though most severe, was short; that she is spared feeling for me what I now feel for her; and though I must finish my journey alone, yet is it a very short portion of my pilgrimage which remains to be accomplished."

Mrs. Martha More was a most benevolent and pious lady: she was humble and unobtrusive: her conversation was cheerful, without levity: she was serious, without affectation; zealous, without being officious. In her Christian efforts, there was nothing like ostentation: her undisguised simplicity made it evident to all, that her great exertions in the cause of piety were purely the result of principle, not of a wish to obtain applause. Her understanding was sound; her mind was cultivated; and her aptitude to impart instruction was striking: her knowledge of the Scriptures, and of the fundamental points of Christian doctrine, was extensive and discriminating. The real goodness of her heart was apparent to all who were favoured with her company. Without being trifling, she was always lively and engaging: like her sister, she diligently cultivated a devotional spirit, and often faithfully examined her own heart. The following memorandum was found in her papers. "What a universal deception is every thing in this world!—We deceive each other; we deceive ourselves; and above all, we endeavour to deceive the great Searcher of hearts; Him who pierces our inmost thoughts. We acknowledge, by words, that He is omniscient; and we dare acknowledge it with gravity of countenance, whilst our practice convicts us of a contrary feeling. With an outward solemnity, which adds to the enormity of the guilt, we audibly make this public response to the minister, 'I will say unto the Lord thou are my hope,' and yet every time we repeat these words, how do we make the Lord our hope? By putting our trust in mammon: by devoting to it our time and our talents:

by pursuing the pleasures and luxuries of the world with insatiable avidity, and by giving the wearied, cold refuse of our hearts into the hands of our Creator. But let me not thus severely scrutinize the hearts of others, and be doubly condemned by the omissions and commissions of my own. God will, I hope, enable me to undeceive myself more and more every day." She was subject to occasional attacks of depression, and her conduct at those seasons is worthy of imitation. She was accustomed, when thus visited, to consult her Bible, to see if some suitable portion of the sacred word might not relieve her mind: the happy result of this plan, in one instance, is thus recorded. "Being low and melancholy, I took my Bible, as was my common practice on such occasions, when that text particularly struck me; 'He doth not willingly afflict, nor grieve the children of men.' From the bottom of my soul, I believe it to be with great unwillingness that the all-merciful God afflicts his creatures. 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;' and who would not cheerfully endure chastisement to be beloved of God? May my afflictions strengthen me boldly to ask my heart, 'How dwelleth the love of God in me?' Dare I reply, that it does so, by leading me to hate vice, to love virtue, and daily to discern more clearly that repentance and faith are the terms on which the blessings of the gospel can only be received; and that the whole design of Christianity is to humble the sinner, to exalt the Saviour, and to promote holiness. By these reflections I feel my spirits raised: who, then, can say that religion is gloomy? None but the unhappy individual who lives without a ray of it in his heart."

But the loss to Mrs. More of this amiable and excellent sister was not more acutely felt by her than it was deeply deplored by the villagers, who had for many years been the objects of her affec-

tionate solicitude. By all, in every village, to which her labours had extended, her decease was most sincerely and unfeignedly regretted. Her conciliatory manners, the real kindness of her heart, the deep sympathy she ever felt for their spiritual as well as for their temporal welfare, and the promptitude with which she had relieved and consoled them in so many seasons of great necessity, made an impression on their minds, not soon to be effaced. Each regarded the loss as a common calamity; and for weeks afterwards, such was their depression, and so truly did they sympathize with their surviving benefactress, that they ventured not to disturb her repose by their usual applications for relief. It was not, however, till the Shipham schoolmaster repaired thither for his accustomed supply of books for distribution, that the true cause of discontinuing these visits was known. Surprised at the circumstance, Mrs. More asked the poor man the reason. "Why, madam," he replied, "they be so cut up for the sad loss we have all sustained, that they have not heart to come."

What salutary reflections does the removal of this eminent Christian excite! How useful was her life, how peaceful and happy her death! Her end was peace; the blessing of them that were ready to perish, came upon her. How estimable, rather may we not say how inestimable is well-directed, active piety! How elevated and refined are its enjoyments! What principles but those of Christianity, well understood, heartily embraced, and practically obeyed, can produce fruit so ennobling and rich? It is delightful to reflect, that in our beloved country, though iniquity still abounds, yet there are not a few who, like this Christian lady, are vigorously exerting themselves to extend the softening, hallowing, and happy influence of piety, around the circles in which they move. Long may they be spared to pursue their noble,

though, by the world, unapplauded career of useful effort; and when, at length, they are summoned hence, may their end be like hers, peaceful and happy. And may that Divine Spirit, who alone can renew the heart, raise up many successors, to devote their time, talents, and influence, to the same holy purpose.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Republishes her 'Political Tracts'—Declining health—Tranquil state of mind—Recovery—Tribute to the memory of George the Third—Remarks of Madame Necker's productions—Definition of religion—Continued desire to be useful—Method of reading the Scriptures—Elected a member of the Royal Society of Literature—Sits for her likeness—Publication of 'Nursery Rhymes'—Views on popular education—Censure of light reading—Opinion of Scott's and Byron's works—Suffers another dangerous attack—Resignation—Value of religion—Its attainability.

THOUGH the death of her sister, for some time after her decease, pressed heavily on Mrs. More's spirits, yet she gradually rose above her feelings, and in the course of a few months her mind, which seemed, at first, as if it would sink under the visitation into a state of confirmed inactivity, recovered perfectly its tone and vigour. She allowed not her domestic sorrows to enfeeble her efforts to promote the public good. At the advanced age of seventy-five she interested herself much in all that seemed likely to check the evil and insubordinate spirit of the times. Before the end of 1819, though she was still in such delicate health as to be entirely confined to her room, yet she arranged for publication all her patriotic tracts and papers; which were accordingly published, in one volume, and were most extensively circulated, it was thought with good effect.

Through the whole of the spring of 1820, and the preceding winter, Mrs. More's health rather grew

worse than better. Indeed her friends entertained serious apprehensions that her valuable life was drawing rapidly to a close. Her affliction was, however, entirely bodily. Her mind retained all its power, and all its predilections in favour of her village exertions. Even when suffering under extreme weakness, she writes: "I have begun to-day the new and painful task of preparing the school-rewards. I cannot hear of a schoolmistress, what think you of my taking the place? I am tolerably well, but have not broken prison yet, for I take cold if I only cross the room to an opposite chamber." In the summer of 1820 the painful apprehensions of her friends, that her end was rapidly approaching, were excited anew. Her attacks of illness became more frequent and more alarming. She was seized one night, towards the middle of August, with a violent and most dangerous spasmodic attack, which resisted every effort to remove it. She thought herself dying: all the family surrounded her bed, expecting every hour would be her last. For several days she continued in this most alarming state; during which the hopes of her friends were held in the most painful suspense, and even when the more alarming symptoms had subsided, to such a state of weakness was she reduced that she was not expected long to survive.

Her state of mind under this severe attack was enviable. Not one expression of complaint escaped her lips. In the intervals of her severest paroxysms of pain, she repeated, with all the emphasis her wasted strength would permit, many most appropriate passages of Scripture. "When, where, and as thou wilt, O God," she submissively exclaimed. "I who have written so much on submission, ought now to practise it." She did, indeed, practise it, under circumstances the most trying. "I trust," she says, "that I have not a wish or a hope, but for my Lord to do with me as seemeth good unto him. I hope I

feel the same patience and submission as dear Patty did. I have great comfort and quietness in my mind, and except in the anguish of extreme suffering, I hope it may be said, I bear my affliction patiently. O my soul, tarry thou thy Lord's leisure: He, himself, is the portion of thy inheritance. When we are on the brink of eternity, how do all earthly things shrink into their merited littleness! This is the point from whence to view them. O God, thou art my God, my soul thirsteth for thee. I hope I can say, that I have never, through the whole of my long illness, expressed a wish, or put up a single prayer for recovery.—I find it the only thing to lie at the foot of the cross, and calmly say, 'Thy will be done.'" With great energy, she said, "I thank God that I feel no anxiety, whether to live or to die. At the foot of the cross there is safety; and blessed, be God, I am enabled to cast myself there, in full, undivided, unqualified reliance on that blood, that was shed upon it."

It was now that Mrs. More ascertained satisfactorily the value of the Christian principles she had embraced; the practical, consoling influence of which she had, in her works, so ably and so zealously inculcated. "I have nothing, I can do nothing," she remarked. "The righteousness, mercies, and merits of Christ are to me all in all." Thankful that she had not put off the great concerns of religion till the time of affliction, she exclaimed: "What should I do at this trying season, if I had the work now to begin?" Her characteristic lowliness of mind was conspicuous in the whole of her affliction. Being told of the death of an excellent and pious neighbour, after a short illness, she said, "How much more need have I of correction than he! A few days sufficed for him; I have required many months. Such lengthened sufferings prove how greatly I needed purification." Referring to a recent case, in which her 'Practical

Piety' had been made useful to an individual, she exclaimed, "How deeply humbled and grateful ought I to be, that God has deigned to work by so mean an instrument. To him be all the glory. I hope I do not think any thing of my doings. I utterly discard them: to him be all the praise and thanksgiving for ever." Although she felt not that triumphant faith in the near prospect of eternity, which some Christians have enjoyed, yet, through the whole of her affliction, she experienced the greatest serenity of mind. "How delightful," she exclaimed, "is it to know, that the joys of heaven will be unspeakable and full of glory! There we shall rest in the bosom of our God and Saviour; and be continually favoured with a full enjoyment of his promise. It is perhaps a low idea of heaven, yet is it not without comfort to me, who rest so very ill generally, that there will be no *night* there, nor will the inhabitants any more say, I am sick." She was ready to die, but not unwilling to live. An earnest desire being expressed for her recovery, she said, "Do not wish it: pray rather that God's will may be done in me, and by me; pray that I may bear testimony to His faithfulness unto the end, and may be enabled to renounce every thing, except my hold upon the rock of my salvation. It will be all well; my case is in good hands: suffering is the penalty of sin. Not only are our diseases painful, but the very remedies for them are also, for the most part, bitter and painful. A striking proof to me, that man is a fallen creature."

After lying nearly a month in such imminent danger, that every day seemed as if it must be her last, her friends had at length, in answer to their many fervent prayers, the satisfaction to see her gradually recover. Again she entered with them in spirit, though not in person, into all those plans of usefulness which she had originated, and which it afforded her great pleasure to see they were zealously

active to carry into full effect. Her state, however, was still exceedingly precarious, and she had no expectation, herself, that she could long survive. "I enter with you," she said to a friend, "into the details of this plan, not that I have the most remote idea of living through the winter, but our duty is to plan for time and live for eternity. My prayer must now be to submit to be useless. This is the very correction I stood in need of. To annihilate self is the great point, and to rejoice that things go on as well or better, though I am not permitted to be the doer of them. But I find it less easy to *suffer* than to act for God."

During her severe attack, Mrs. More received a letter from her bookseller, requesting her to compose, as a sort of preface to the seventh edition of her 'Moral Sketches,' which was then going to press, a brief tributary sketch, of the character of the late excellent monarch, George the Third, who had recently exchanged his earthly for a heavenly crown. The veneration in which she had always held this Christian prince strongly inclined her to comply with this request, and though confined entirely to her bed, she would have made the attempt had not her friends dissuaded her from it. A few days afterwards, Cadell again wrote her, if possible to oblige him; and without naming it to any of her domestics, such was her desire to do him the favour, and so congenial was the request with her feelings, that in compliance with his wishes, she composed a well-expressed panegyric of the lamented king. Her account of the affair is illustrative of the persevering efforts with which she accomplished what she had undertaken: "In the midst of my illness, Cadell wrote me to preface a new edition of 'Moral Sketches,' by a short tribute to our late king. My friend replied, it was utterly impossible; that I might as well attempt to fly as to write. A

week after he renewed his entreaty: I was then much worse; but I fancied, that what was difficult was not impossible. So having got every body out of the way, I furnished myself with pen, ink, and paper, which I concealed in my bed, and next morning, in a high fever, without having formed one idea, bolstering myself up, I began to scribble. I got on for about seven pages, my hand being almost as incompetent as my head. I hid my scrawl, and said not a word while my doctor and my friends wondered at my increased debility. After a strong opiate, I next morning returned to my task, and finished seven pages more. These almost illegible papers I delivered to my friend to transcribe and send away. I got well scolded; but I loved the king, and was carried through by a sort of affectionate impulse."

Contrary to Mrs. More's expectations, and to the fears of her friends; her health, instead of becoming worse, improved through the winter. In a few weeks we find her employing her pen, in bringing up the arrears of her correspondence, and the interesting letters she wrote, proved that her afflictions had neither enfeebled her judgment, nor diminished her vivacity. She could enjoy, with as much zest as ever, the productions of genius. Her deep piety, had not rendered her insensible to the beauties of literature. Nor was it indeed, in any case, ever intended so to do. Religion does not vulgarize our minds; it deprives us not of a relish for works of taste; it refines and elevates rather than debases them.

A friend had sent for her perusal, 'Madame Neckar's Notice sur le Caractère et les Ecrits de Madame de Stäel,' requesting the favour of her remarks upon it. The solidity of her judgment, and the accuracy of her discrimination will be seen by the following remarks, made with her characteristic humility: "I have read this work with

mingled feelings of pain and pleasure. It indicates a kindred genius with the work it celebrates, a similarity of striking thoughts, brilliancy of style, and happy turn of expression, the same ardour in feeling, the same generosity of sentiment. I wish my regard to truth would allow me to stop here; but you insist on knowing my sentiments. I really feel myself so *entirely* inferior to both ladies, that I am not worthy to offer them. I feel also, that by so doing I shall expose myself to the charge of want of taste, want of candour, or even of envying such eclipsing merit. It would be a satire on my own judgment and feelings, not to allow that I am among the innumerable admirers of Madame de Stäel. And like the woman she celebrates, Madame Neckar writes elegantly, and even splendidly, but she has employed her eloquence to varnish over every thing in her relative's conduct and writings. Religion, however, is the great point in Madame de Stäel's character, on which she insists: but these distinguished ladies have a religion of their own, not the Christian religion: humility is excluded; there is no intimation of a fallen nature; of its restoration; of the renewal of the soul; of divine influences, &c. 'It is,' as Isaiah says, 'as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and he drinketh, but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath no appetite.' Yet the word inspiration is to be found in every page, but it is the inspiration of genius, the swellings of conscious talent. Alas, I could weep for them! I am, at present, too unwell to look over the passages in the admirable work, 'De L'Allemagné,' on which I took the liberty to hazard a remark or two in my 'Essay on St. Paul.' But the following passage in Madame Neckar's book recals the substance of it to my mind: '*Le Juge suprême sera clément envers le génie.*'

This, I humbly conceive, is a dangerous sentiment. Voltaire, Rousseau, Bollingbroke and Byron, with a hundred others, would gladly take shelter, for the use to which they applied their talents, under the wing of Madame Neckar. Perhaps, if I had as much personal interest in defending genius as she has, I might have been tempted to treat it with greater lenity. I am a passionate admirer of the gifts of God, and whatever is beautiful in nature or exquisite in art comes from him: they proceed from his goodness, but form no part of his essence. Nor can I conceive, that the most enchanting beauties of nature, or the most splendid productions of the fine arts, have any necessary connexion with religion. Genius and talents are gifts of God: they serve to adorn and to display her in her brightest beauty, but they are no part of religion itself: on the contrary, religion has found some of her worst enemies among those who have been the most supremely gifted. Observe, I mean the religion of Christ, not that of Plato; the religion of reality, not that of the beau ideal. The most exquisite pictures and statues have been produced, in those parts of Europe where pure religion has made the least progress. These decorate religion, but they neither produce nor advance it: as enjoyments and refreshments of life, they are compatible with, but make no part of religion. Athens was once the most learned and the most polished city in the world: yet the eloquent preaching of Paul made but one convert in the whole Areopagus."

At the close of this interesting letter, which proves most satisfactorily, that Mrs. More's mind had lost none of its vigour, nor her pen any of its power, we have the following accurate definition of religion: "Though I have already said too much, yet I cannot help adding a word, in what appears to me to be the distinctive character of Christianity; I mean, a deep

abiding sense in the heart of our fallen nature; of our actual and personal sinfulness; of our really lost state, but for the redemption wrought for us by Jesus Christ; of the universal necessity of a change of heart, and the conviction that this change can only be effected by the Holy Spirit. This is not a splendid, but it is a saving religion: it is humbling, now that it may be elevating hereafter. It appears to me, also, that the requisition which the Christian religion makes on the most highly gifted, as well as on the most meanly endowed, is, that after the loftiest and most successful exercise of the most brilliant talents, the favoured possessor should lay his performances and himself at the foot of the cross, with the same deep self-abasement and self-renunciation as his more illiterate neighbour, and this from a conviction of who it is that hath made them to differ."

Mrs. More was aware, that the remarks she made on this volume would be seen by Madame Neckar; and it was probably her design, thus to bring under that distinguished lady's notice a lucid statement of the great facts of Christianity, in the hope that it might have some good effect on the mind of one in whose welfare it will be seen, by the following remarks, she felt a lively interest. "Madame Neckar has treated me and my bold remonstrance with a delicacy which shows the refinement of her own elevated mind. Truly glad should I be, if such a mind could be brought to receive 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' for those fine speculations which she and her accomplished relatives have fed on as Christianity, afford no solid relief to a fallen creature, and such the best are by nature. The wisest and the best stand in as much need to be redeemed by the blood of Christ, and to be sanctified and guided by the Holy Spirit, as the most illiterate and the most unworthy. The two great principles on which our salvation must be

founded, are faith and holiness: faith, without which it is impossible to please God; holiness, without which no man can see the Lord. These are not my words, as you know, but the words of an inspired apostle."

It appears, by Madame Neckar's letters to the mutual friend of herself and Mrs. More, that she had mistaken the purport of Mrs. More's remarks, and had formed an incorrect opinion respecting her character, imagining, that because she had animadverted chiefly on the irreligious tendency of the volume, she possessed no sprightliness of mind, and had no taste for any thing but the sober realities of religion. A greater mistake she could hardly have fallen into; for even at Mrs. More's then advanced age, notwithstanding her long and severe affliction, yet she was always cheerful and lively: "This amiable lady," she remarks, "a little mistakes my character and turn of mind: she supposes me to be so strict in my attention to religion, that I disapprove of the lighter parts of her volume, or, at least, have no taste for them: but so far is this from being the case, that I delight in her narrative, in her anecdote, and in her traits of character. It is only on the more serious passages in the vo- volume that I took the liberty to animadvert. I should not have offered a remark on the *omission* of religion, it was only on what appeared to me to be *errors* in religion, that I presumed to speak. The powerful intellect, the high cultivation, the candour of mind, of which Madame Neckar has given so amiable an instance, in her bearing with my impertinent observations, impel me to observe how fine a soil that mind would be in which to plant genuine Christianity. This, though a self-denying, humbling religion, gives more than it takes away. It gives that peace which the world with all its promises and blandishments, cannot give. It produces humility, which far from prohibiting the exercise of talents, only encourages their consecration

to Him who gave them, with that prostration of heart and renunciation of self, which will lead the possessor to exclaim, 'Who hath made me to differ, and what have I that I have not received ?'"

Mrs. More continued in that state of health through the winter of 1820 which enabled her to give directions for the distribution of the liberal sums annually entrusted to her for charitable purposes, by her benevolent friends. Either she or her sister had always done this personally before, and the blessing of them that were ready to perish had come upon them. It had now to be done by other hands, but it was still under her immediate direction. Her incapability for active personal efforts in the cause of truth had not diminished, in the slightest degree, her desire to be useful, to the full extent of her ability. Her mind was, if possible, more active than when she could herself carry into effect the benevolent plans it conceived. She seemed to feel the entire force of the Saviour's remark, "I must work the work of him that sent me, while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work." She felt more than ever the value of religion, and was more anxious to promote its extension; and though she could do nothing actively herself, yet it afforded her pleasure to find efficient instruments raised up, who were willing to execute the benevolent projects she had originated. It was evident, both from her conversation and her correspondence, that she was still pressing after more exalted piety than she had yet attained. "Your religious observations," she remarks in a letter to one of her correspondents, "interested me greatly. I entirely agree with you, that there is no better preparation for death than the daily endeavour to conform our lives to the precepts of the gospel; that if our repentance for our past offences is sincere, and our desire to obey the will of God is steady, and exemplified in our daily habits, if we are

daily looking to God through the Redeemer, for the help of his Spirit—and if we are daily living by faith, there is no better preparation for death. As to unsinning obedience I believe the prophets and the apostles never attained it."

Her esteemed correspondent, Sir W. Pepy's, of whose bounty she annually partook, in aid of her benevolent projects, consulted her about this time, as to the method it was best to pursue to obtain a correct acquaintance with the most important parts of Scripture. Her reply shows with what care she had been accustomed to consult the sacred volume: "I know not of any selection of Scripture that I could recommend. My own practice has been, to make a cross in the margin against every text that I think peculiarly striking, or capable of self-application. The only parts of the Bible at which I open involuntarily, are the Psalms and the prophet Isaiah, who may justly be called the evangelical prophet. There are also very sublime passages in Jeremiah, and in the minor prophets, spiritual and personal as well as prophetic. Perhaps I read the epistles rather than the gospels, for this reason, the latter being historical, have taken more hold of one's memory, and the former being less obvious, require greater attention. I can truly say, that I have seldom taken up any part of the Old or New Testament, in which I did not perceive something that I had not observed before, or seen an old truth presented in a new light. I do not, however, read either sacred or profane writers, so much as I wish. Indifferent health, advanced age, the cares of my family and schools, with many other concerns in the parishes to which I have to attend, are great hinderances."

Mrs. More seems to have become increasingly conscious that the Christian life can only be kept in vigour by the Divine blessing on the diligent and daily use of the means enjoined for its sustenance; among

which the careful, serious perusal of the sacred volume, not to the exclusion of other works, but in preference to them all, she ever regarded as of great importance. In this respect, her conduct is well worthy of imitation. We cannot be too conversant with the Scriptures. So inexhaustible is the fund of spiritual knowledge which they contain, that new beauties will ever be discovered in them, by the enlightened mind. Streams of living waters, as purifying as they are satisfying, will issue from this fountain, often as it may be repaired to. The carnal, worldly, and sensual will find it dry, and ill-suited to satiate their low desires; but to the pious, humble, and devout it will ever prove most refreshing. A few other books may be read, and re-read with pleasure and profit, but none with such increasing delight and advantage as the Bible. How far it is justifiable to adopt Mrs. More's plan of even consulting any portion of the Scriptures incidentally, we pretend not to determine. It is true that we can hardly open upon any part of the Psalms, and some other of the sacred books, without meeting with many striking and beautiful passages, calculated to elevate the mind and to affect the heart. Scripture has often been thus powerfully applied by the Divine Spirit, greatly to the benefit and encouragement of the truly pious. Still we think it a plan by no means to be commended. A regular, connected perusal of each book in the sacred canon, is far more likely to promote both public and private instruction; and it deserves our serious consideration, whether there be not something like irreverence in thus consulting the sacred volume, separating it into fragments according to our fancies, merely to suit our convenience; or dividing it into piecemeal selections, in a way that we should not dare to do with any other work.

Towards the close of 1820, Mrs. More had the pleasure to learn, that nearly all her tracts, written

to counteract the evil spirit of the times, had been translated into French, and were extensively circulated, some of them having passed through several editions. Shortly afterwards, she received from New York an American copy of her works, elegantly bound, respectfully presented to her by some individuals there. About the same time, she was elected as an honorary member of the Royal Society of Literature, then recently established. A distinction, however, which she declined accepting, partly because she thought she had no claim to it; but chiefly because she considered the circumstance of sex alone a disqualification."

Her health improved but little during the whole of 1821. The state of her mind was that of calm submission to the Divine will. "Though it has pleased Infinite Mercy," she gratefully remarks, "to keep me this year from any serious afflictions, yet the aggregate of petty cares, and the multiplication of little wearing intrusions, with not a few paltry vexations, will, I hope, serve to wean me still more and more from the desire of life. When we feel assured that it is far better to depart, and to be with Christ, it is astonishing that we do not more practically adopt that great article of faith. I was seized the other day with a violent shivering fit, succeeded by a smart attack of fever; but I gradually grew better, by persevering in my old remedies. This poor crazy tenement of mine encounters many shocks: that I resist them is marvellous; but I wait the great Builder's will for being turned out on its falling to the ground."

In the autumn, Mrs. More most reluctantly complied with the urgent importunities of two of her friends to sit for her likeness. So averse was she to the measure, that she entirely withheld her consent, till the artists actually arrived at Barley Wood; and it was with difficulty she could then be prevailed upon

to sit. Adverting to the circumstance, she writes: "You can hardly conceive the vexation which has for the last two or three weeks hung over my head. You know the wearisome importunity of some of my friends, for me to sit for my picture, and the pertinacity of my refusal. They have, however, notwithstanding all I could say, actually sent down Mr. Pickersgill, an artist whose talents are held in the highest estimation. It is my hard fate, too, to be required to sit for two portraits, lest one friend should think his is only the copy of the other. It is a cruel vexation to me, in every point of view: I have opposed it with all my might: morally and physically, it is grievous to me. Think of the fatigue it will give me, and the great uncertainty of my health from one day to another! Then comes my great objection—that, with my fragment of life, a few out of the very few days which remain to me, should be wasted, to rescue for a few years from oblivion my withered face. I would cheerfully make the artist a present for the loss of his time, if he would let me off; but my friends would not hear of it. My anxiety about this foolish business has had its share in retarding my recovery, and I lament that I should have yielded my quiet and comfort to the too pressing solicitations of friendship."

About this time, Mrs. More published her 'Nursery Rhymes,' which she had composed during her leisure hours for the young, whom it was well calculated to interest and instruct. Her opinion of them she thus modestly records: "I do not think the 'Rhymes' make their way much: I fancy the world is pretty much of my opinion about them. Most of my friends write favourably, but partiality warps their judgments."

The subject of providing a national education for the poor then occupied the attention of the public, and was expected to become a legislative measure.

A work had been recently published upon it, recommending, not only that the poor should be educated, but that they should also be taught the higher branches of knowledge. The interest Mrs. More took in this important question, to which she had paid the closest attention for so many years, and which she still regarded as of paramount importance, elicited from her, in one of her letters to Sir W. Pepys, the following remarks, illustrative of the soundness of her judgment, and descriptive of the specific object she had always sought to accomplish in her village labours: "I wish I had time to enter at large on the subject of instructing the poor. I have thought much upon it, and suspect that there is ultraism on both sides of the question. My views of popular instruction are narrow; the views of some others, I think, too narrow. I will give you a sketch of my own poor practice when I commenced my labours, but opposition obliged me to lower it. In setting out, I found that many of the small farmers were as illiterate as their workmen; hence it occurred to me to employ schoolmasters, who, to sound piety, added good sense and competent knowledge. To each of these I gave directions, that besides instructing *all* the poor children in the parish at my expense, they should take the farmers' sons on week-days, to teach them not only reading, writing, and arithmetic, but carefully to instruct them in religious principles. I had long thought that the knowledge necessary for persons of this class was such as would qualify them for constables, overseers, churchwardens, or jurymen: further than this I have never gone. These limits I knew the ultra-educationists would despise. You have, probably, seen a book on popular education, written by a man of great talents. He contends that there is nothing which the poor ought not to be taught: they must not stop short of science. They must learn history,

in its widest extent. Goldsmith's Greece is nothing; he recommends Mitford's, with others of the same stamp. Now, the absurdity of the thing is most obvious; supposing they had money to buy books, where would they find time to read them, without the neglect of all business, and the consequent violation of their duty? I have exerted my feeble voice to prevail on my few parliamentary friends to steer the middle way, between the Scylla of brutal ignorance and the Charybdis of a literary education. The one is cruel, the other preposterous."

These judicious remarks, on a subject so connected with the public good, are alike honourable to Mrs. More's judgment and to her heart. As a real friend to the poor, she was anxious to give them that instruction which would qualify them for the better discharge of their duties, civil and religious, without raising them above their stations. She saw that, in attempting to accomplish too much, the very end of education would be defeated. She wished not to make the poor scholars, or philosophers, or critics, but good members of society, and Christians. Hence the care she took to instruct them in the great principles of Christianity, and the anxiety she evinced that religion should ever form a principal feature in their education.

The notice she had so long been accustomed to take of the evils most prevalent in society, that she might raise against them her warning voice, she still continued to take. And though she mixed not with the world, yet she had the keenness to discover, almost the first symptoms of the errors peculiar to the times. Of this the following remarks, in a letter she sent to the Rev. Daniel Wilson, dated January 1st, 1822, will afford ample proof. "I am glad to see you have noticed, in your excellent 'Sermon on Temptation,' among other dangers, that of light reading. I have lately reflected much on the

alarming increase of this perilous pleasure. I really think it is, at this period, doing more harm than cards. I mean family cards, not gaming. I would the evil were confined to the worldly and the dissipated. The religious world, if I may use the expression, are I am afraid falling much into it. I am now reading 'Prior's Solomon,' an exquisite Poem in my opinion, abounding with instruction and beauty; yet scarcely any body I meet with has read it. Of the fashionable reading, if there were no other evil, than the immense consumption of time, the mischief would not be small. Thirty volumes of Scott's novels have, in the succession of a very few years, covered every table. How many thousands of hours must have been swallowed up in perusing them in large families, where each reads to himself. I could wish to see a wider separation between the worldly and the pious, not only in the articles of music and dress, but especially in reading. The useful reading compared with the light and idle, like our medicine compared with our food, is but as grains to pounds. Nor does the evil consist merely in the reading itself, but in its disqualifying tendency for the perusal of works solidly useful. It is not that old age has made me insensible to the charms of genius. In that one respect I think I am not grown obtuse. I have been really looking for time to read one or two of Scott's novels. Whatever objections may be made to them in certain respects, they contain more maxims of virtue than many of the books called moral. I read his poetry as it came out, with that pleasure and admiration which great talents must always excite; but I do not remember in it any of those practical principles, and that sound instruction which may be gleaned from our older poets. I am far from putting Byron and Scott on a level. The former is an anti-moralist indeed; but surely I may say the latter is a non-moralist."

There appears an inconsistency in Mrs. More's opinions of Scott's productions. This arose from her want of precision in the use of the term moral: though none were more careful, generally, to distinguish between morality and religion. She evidently intended to say, not only that Byron's productions were anti-religious, but that they were anti-moral: and of Scott's, that though they contained many excellent moral precepts, yet were they non-religious: a truth which none, we feel assured, who are competent to form an opinion on the subject, will call in question. We might look in vain through the entire productions of this master-mind, for a simple accurate delineation of true religion. Nor can we forbear to remark, that such is the case almost universally with works of this class, however eloquently written, and however unexceptionable they may otherwise be. The imagination only is addressed; or if statements be made, they are much more frequently of an evil, than of a good tendency; and far more likely to augment the aversion of men to things connected with their eternal well-being, than to diminish it. Hence arises the evil of light reading.

In the spring of 1822 Mrs. More suffered another most severe attack of illness. So imminent was her danger, that for several days her friends thought it impossible she could survive. All around her were much alarmed, but she was tranquil, resigned, and happy. In her severest pain, she was never once heard to murmur. She several times said, when there seemed to be no chance of her living, "Were it in my power to determine, whether to live or to die, and could I determine either, by the lifting up of my hand, I would not dare to do it." Under the pressure of most acute pain, she exclaimed, "Shall I have received so much good at the hands of God, and shall I not receive evil. I

know, O Lord, that thou will not lay upon me more than thou wilt enable me to bear. Every stroke of thy rod is given in mercy; all are inflicted in number, weight, and measure by a kind parent. Not one of them is unnecessary. All the afflictions I have suffered for the last three years, especially, have been designed to prepare me for heaven; but still I am not duly prepared. If I am *not* better after so much loving correction, what should I have been without it? I would gratefully think of the long-suffering goodness of my gracious Father."

But though she was usually thus resigned, yet on one or two occasions, when nearly overcome by the violence of her disorder, she exclaimed, with great fervour, though not impatiently: "O that I had wings like a dove, for then I would fly away and be at rest; I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempests." After a night of severe suffering, she once said to a sympathizing friend, "O what a morning will that be, when I shall awake in endless joy! When will it come? That was not an unpremeditated assertion, which Paul made when he said nobly and truly, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.'"

With the delightful views which she occasionally had of the heavenly world, it is not surprising that she should sometimes have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, on whom her hopes of salvation were alone placed—whom, though unseen, she most sincerely loved, and believing in whom, she could rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. A friend coming one morning early to her bed-side, she said, "I have enjoyed during this night nearer, and more endearing views of the eternal world than I have ever before experienced. Almost every text that bears upon the subject of future glory I have been able to recollect, and my thoughts on each

have been most delightful. I seem to long as much for the holiness, as for the happiness of heaven. What blessedness is there in the idea of being delivered from the possibility of sinning."

Her conversation through the whole of this affliction might truly be said to be in heaven: thither all her desires tended. She spoke of her departure with that calm self-possession, which a well-grounded hope of a blessed immortality can alone inspire: hence her attendants were under no necessity, in reading to her the letters she received, to suppress those parts which spoke of her decease as apparently very near. Once, after repeating the whole of the thirty-ninth Psalm, till she came to the last verse, where the Psalmist earnestly prays, "O spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence, and be no more seen," she suddenly broke off, saying, "That verse I cannot repeat; it does not express my feelings." When, at length, favourable symptoms appeared, and her physician expressed hopes of her recovery, she mildly said to him, "I fear I am not thankful enough; but, suppose you were going a long journey, to receive a large inheritance, would you not be grieved, were you suddenly called back to receive two or three trifling sums, when you had nearly reached the end?"

Mrs. More's remarks during this affliction, were, many of them, most impressive, and such as could only have come from a mind in a high degree spiritual and heavenly: they were listened to with intense interest by her attendants, all of whom accounted it a privilege to surround her bed. Her entire conduct on this occasion was an illustration of the power of Christianity, to carry its possessor through circumstances the most trying, where it is cordially embraced, and where the Divine Spirit applies its truths efficaciously to the heart. This, we may rest assured, He will never fail to do, in all

cases where it is humbly and earnestly sought. That religion which will enable us to submit patiently to the severest trials, to rejoice even in tribulation, to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, fearing no evil, and even in death itself, exultingly to exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" is ever within our reach. The cry of the penitent, humble enquirer after mercy was never yet unheard or unnoticed. God is far more willing to bestow his favours on us, than we are to solicit them. If we have them not, it is because we ask not for them, or because we ask not aright. Low as we are sunk, and guilty and helpless as we are become, yet is there no cause to despair. We cannot save ourselves; but we have a Redeemer, who can save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. He is as willing as he is able; and while he kindly invites us to partake of his mercy, he assures us that whoso cometh unto him, he will in nowise cast out. Till we comply with his invitations, we can neither enjoy the pleasures of life, nor endure its afflictions; much less can we be prepared to render up our final account. Religion is as essential to our present comfort, as it is to our future welfare. How inexcusable shall we be, if we make it not the great object of our pursuit.

CHAPTER XIX.

Christian sympathy—Love of reading—Efforts to check prevalent public evils—Remarks on the pernicious effects of music and light reading—Accountability for the use of time—Modern poets—Deep piety—Zeal in the cause of missions—Continued benevolent efforts—Barley Wood School at Ceylon—Christian submission—Publication of 'Spirit of Prayer;' its merits—Importance of prayer—Continued interest in her schools—Death of Sir W. Pepys—Annoying visits of strangers.

Mrs. More's health continued gradually to improve during the summer of 1822, and by the following autumn it was better than it had been since the death of her sister: her friends, who had daily expected to hear of her removal, imagining her case to be hopeless, now hastened to congratulate her on her recovery, and Barley Wood became again their favourite resort. They had the pleasure to find that her mind had suffered no diminution of its vigour: she took the same lively interest in every benevolent enterprise that she had ever taken; engaged in conversation with nearly the same vivacity, and very shortly afterwards resumed the use of her pen, to answer the letters of her correspondents.

Her first letter proves that her mind had neither become less serious, nor less anxious to employ its energies in the course of benevolence. To Sir W. Pepys, she writes, "I am, at length, through the

goodness of God, once more able to write a few lines to one of my oldest, most interesting, and most valued friends. Among the numerous mercies I have had to be thankful for during my severe attack, I must name, as the chief, one in which you, my dear friend, came in for a portion. I was able to direct all my little charities myself, so that none of them were suspended. Through your generous bounty I thus relieved many who were suffering under severe afflictions: I relieved these, as I commonly do, through the apothecary who attends them and me. I had a little bag pinned to my curtain, from which I sent them the almost daily dole; and I believe some lives were saved, and others made comfortable. I cannot help here expressing an ardent wish, that all my opulent friends, especially those who live in the country, would, in this way, make a conscientious apothecary the vehicle of their charity: I have done it, myself, in my little way, for the last twenty years. But I have said too much of myself: can you forgive it? This is my first attempt to write. Whether my recovery will be perfect I am not anxious to know. We have nothing to do with it but to submit. I bless God I enjoyed great tranquillity of mind at the worst, and was willing to depart, and to be with Christ, had it been His will; but I left it in His hands who does all things well."

Christian sympathy and liberality were thus brought by Mrs. More into daily exercise, in circumstances the most unfavourable. Her own personal sufferings, so far from making her insensible to those of others, seemed to have a contrary effect. The plan she adopted to carry her benevolent object into effect is well worthy of imitation. Convinced, by a long course of experience, that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and anxious to perpetuate the luxury she had often enjoyed, of affording relief to the needy, she devised an expedient, as simple as

it was efficient. She was evidently conscious that her inability to distribute with her own hands her accustomed bounty, formed no valid excuse for the neglect of a duty so important. In making her medical man the distributor of her bounty, she acted wisely. None are better able to judge of the wants of the poor than gentlemen of this profession ; and when they are sympathetic and pious, none are more suitable distributors of private bounty to the needy. How much is it to be wished, that wealthy individuals, who would gladly give to the needy, but are too enfeebled to do it with their own hands, would select either some useful, active minister, or some humane, pious surgeon, to carry their benevolent designs into effect ! What they could not do themselves, they might thus get done for them. And does it not well deserve their serious consideration, as to how far their inability, under their circumstances, to assist the poor and the needy, will be admissible as an excuse for inactivity, on the day of final accounts.

At this advanced period of life Mrs. More's love of reading continued unabated. As her health improved she devoted to it the greater part of her time. In one of her letters she says : " I never had more delight in reading than I now have." She seemed, indeed, even before she had recovered from her attack sufficiently to be able to read herself, to take the greatest pleasure in hearing works read to her. Almost the first book thus introduced to her notice by her intelligent attendant, was the ' Life of the late Rev. Thomas Scott,' then recently published. A more suitable volume it would have been difficult to select. Mr. Roberts rightly conjectures, that there were few persons whose views of Christian theology more nearly accorded with her own. " I have," she says, " always highly honoured and loved Scott, and have often walked several miles on a Sunday to hear

him at the Lock. With the worst voice, the most northern accent, and very plain manners, sound sense and sound piety were yet so predominant, that like Aaron's serpent, they swallowed up all the rest." She listened with pleasure to the whole of this excellent volume, and made several most interesting remarks upon it while it was reading. Coming to that part of the memoir where Scott's views of the value that ought to be attached to human learning are recorded, she observed, " that it ought never to be forgotten, how useful an instrument it was at the Reformation, and that its revival had immediately preceded the extension of our religion. Admitting it to be only an auxiliary, which none will deny, yet," she adds, " while I would put religion on my right hand, I would also put learning on my left."

The habits she had acquired, by many years observation, of watchful solicitude, to detect any rising, public vice, that she might apply to it a seasonable and a suitable check, forsook her not at this advanced age. Secluded as she was from the world, yet she was not ignorant of daily passing events, nor unacquainted with the prevalent follies of the age. In a letter to one of her most esteemed correspondents, she remarks: "Though I did not quit my bed during near eight months severe but salutary suffering, and shall probably never more quit my chamber, yet, through the unwearied kindness of more Christian friends than any other individual equally unworthy was ever blessed with, I see, through my loop-hole of retreat, or rather hear, of whatever is going on that is interesting. My conclusion is, that wickedness is more wicked than it used to be, and that goodness is better. Religion has certainly increased much among the higher classes in England, and perhaps still more in Ireland. Yet I will venture to say, even to the religious world,—that I have a few things against thee."

To this increased attention to religion among the great and the rich, her own writings, coupled as they had been with her active exertions, had contributed in no small degree. The evils which she deplored are thus noticed : " With no small number of exceptions, I cannot help observing that the common fault of good people is the misappropriation of time. I will only instance two particulars of the evil of which they do not seem to be sufficiently aware—*music and light reading*. Twenty years ago, when I wrote 'Strictures on Female Education,' talking to Bishop Cleaver on this subject, he was so much of my opinion that he sent me the following calculation, which I inserted in my first volume : 'Suppose your pupil to begin music at six, and to continue, on an average, four hours a day till she was eighteen, the time thus employed would be 14,400 hours.'"

Let none imagine, from this, that Mrs. More had no ear for music. Few enjoyed it more, when kept in its proper place, or were better able to appreciate its beauties. It was the large portion of time devoted to it, often to the neglect of things of real importance, of which she complained. To spend so many years in the vigour of life, pursuing a mere embellishment, when that knowledge ought most assiduously to be sought, which should enlarge the mind, improve the heart, and fit the individual for the active duties of life, she justly regarded as a serious evil. And who that dispassionately considers the subject but must be of the same opinion? How many hours which might have been usefully employed, are lost in early life by both sexes, in seeking to acquire a superficial knowledge of music! Of all studies, it is perhaps the most fascinating, but the least beneficial. Pursued occasionally, as an amusement only, it may form an agreeable and not useless recreation. But if allowed to occupy the sole attention, except profes-

sionally, it not unfrequently incapacitates the mind for all other pursuits.

Another evil, prevalent at that time, which she bewailed, was that of light reading, the bad effects of which she had before pointed out. Regarding time as a talent, for the right use of which all are accountable, she thought but a small part of it, if any, ought to be consumed by enlightened characters in the perusal of works of fiction, however elegantly and powerfully written. On this ground she censures not only the fashionable novels of the day, but works of this class, which were by many thought to be unexceptionable; and here she again animadverts, with all her accustomed humility and concern for the interests of piety, on the productions of Sir Walter Scott. Making a distinction between the poetic and the prose works of that great writer, she remarks: "I would not have it supposed that I have not read with delight and admiration all Scott's poetry; this is a repast that might be taken with safety, though certainly not with profit; for it would be difficult to find another specimen of such admirable works, with so few maxims for the improvement of life and manners. Let that pass; they gratify the taste, without vitiating the imagination: add to this, they were written at reasonably distant periods, so that we were refreshed without being crammed. But in his novels, his fecundity is as marvellous as his invention. In what I have read, I rather see the absence of much evil than the presence of much good. Of all people, I ought to be the last to find fault of authors for writing too much; yet I must return to my first position—the misapplication of time. Had he written before the flood, when, perhaps, there were not so many books in the world as he alone has written, all would have been well; he would have been a benefactor to the ante-

diluvian Hilpahs and Zilpahs. A life of eight hundred years might have allowed of the perusal of the whole of his volumes; a proportionate quantity in each century would have been delightful, but for our poor scanty three-score years and ten it is too much. Nay, I under-estimate the chronology; I believe they have all been produced nearly in the last ten years."

Mrs. More's object was to point out the evils of light reading, chiefly as they affected the welfare of pious families. "I readily grant," she says, "that to the mass of readers, the perusal of Scott's works need not he prohibited. To the gay, the worldly, and the dissipated, it is, perhaps, as safe as any other of their pleasureable resources, if not more so, being often their only intellectual one. The strong sense, lively exhibition of character, and animated style of these works, certainly afford aliment to the mind. But my remarks are limited to that class of readers who have made a profession of religion. Let such consider, that if our time is indeed to be accounted for, as scrupulously as any other talents with which we may be entrusted, how will their reckoning stand in the great day of accounts? In the case of some, time is almost the only talent they have. Such ought to be especially careful that this one be rightly employed, as we have an awful lesson of the danger of unprofitableness."

The above extracts will show, that though Mrs. More's love of literature continued unabated, yet she prized it only when she saw it exerted in the cause of religion; and she allowed not herself to be ensnared by its beauties. Nothing could induce her to peruse works, however celebrated might be their authors, which were more likely to pollute than to improve the mind. She regretted much the prevalence of a disposition on the part of many well-wishers to the cause of piety, to be too unsuspicious of the productions of great writers, and too indul-

gent of their vices. The vigilant attention she had paid to the general bearing of literature on the cause of piety, will be seen by the following remarks on the current publications of the day, written with all her characteristic vivacity: "I have been thinking that, notwithstanding all the boasted improvements of the age, one thing is remarkable: I do not know that any of our modern poets, since Cowper, except Milman and Montgomery, have even occasionally written any thing of a serious cast. Many of them are, perhaps, men of correct lives, but they have not added to the stock of improving poetry; while it is singular that, aforetime, even bad men and loose writers, almost uniformly wrote some piece on the subject of religion. Pope, who certainly was no saint, bequeathed to us a poem of peculiar sanctity. His friend Steele, though manager of the theatre, and a careless liver, wrote the 'Christian Hero.' Waller, a political and moral profligate, has left a poem on 'Divine Love.' Prior, some of whose pieces are licentious, has dedicated all the force of his opulent mind to the production of one of the noblest poems in the English language —his 'Solomon;' yet I have never once heard that fine piece quoted. These men bore testimony to the truth of a religion which they would not allow to influence their conduct. Cowley, in the midst of all his metaphysical absurdities, was not ashamed, in that abandoned age, to write his 'Davideis.' But how I run on! I am tired of writing, as you will be of reading, yet I have much more to say."

The delightful state of Mrs. More's mind during the autumn of 1823, will be seen by the following extracts from some most interesting letters she wrote about that time. To her most esteemed friend, Mr. Wilberforce, whose active, philanthropic efforts afforded her the highest pleasure, she remarks:— "Having obtained help of God, I continue to this

day, which is the anniversary of my last seizure. I trust God has sanctified it to me; but, as dear Bishop Hall says, 'we carry about with us such a baggage of calamities, that we are never secure.'" To Lady Bathurst she writes: "Through the great mercy of God, I am enabled once more to have the honour and pleasure of addressing your ladyship. I have been wonderfully preserved, through a season which has swept off nearly all the old people in the land. I do not remember such a mortality. It is above a year and a half that I have been confined to my room, and more than half that time to my bed. My sufferings have been great, but my mercies have been far greater. *Recovery*, at my age, is not to be expected, nor, indeed, unless in submission to the Divine will, is it to be desired. I am thankful to say, that I am able to see my friends. Whether I shall ever quit my chamber, is only known to that Infinite Wisdom, in whose hands are the issues of life and of death. The health of my body might not be good for my mind. I reckon it among the numberless mercies which I have experienced, that in so violent and lasting a fever, I was never, for one moment, delirious, nor had any tendency towards it. During the last few months, I have been able to employ myself in a *new work*, of which I am much more proud than of all my preceding ones, because I am more sure this will do good: it is knitting garters, cuffs, and babies' shoes, for the benefit of the Missionary and Jews' Societies. The missionary cause flourishes astonishingly, and the time seems to be approaching, when all the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kings of our God and of his Christ."

The cause of missions was evidently regarded by Mrs. More, with increasing interest. Neither the infirmities of age, nor her frequent indisposition had rendered her less attentive to the progress Christianity was making in the world. Nothing afforded

her greater pleasure than the growing zeal of Christians generally in this great cause. Perceiving the cultivation of this zeal, in her own case, to be beneficial to her spiritual interest, and finding as the truly pious will ever find, that the more active she became in imparting the blessing of religion to others, the more she enjoyed of its power herself, she rightly inferred, that notwithstanding the determined efforts of its enemies, it was on the whole steadily advancing. "I cannot help thinking," she writes, "that independently of religious feelings, it is more worth while, as a matter of curiosity to an inquisitive mind, to be alive now, than at almost any preceding period. I need not enumerate to you the astonishing and prosperous institutions of piety and charity, nor the successful projects of philosophy, which are now in operation. Of all the interesting events which almost every day now produces, I think not one has excited my feelings so much as the erection of a church at Ferney, over the tomb of the arch-fiend Voltaire, who declared that he would never rest till he had exterminated the very name of Jesus. The publication of the Gospel from that press, which had so long been made the vehicle of his abominations, is indeed the Lord's doing, and is marvellous in our eyes."

In Mrs. More's letters, though religion was freely, and frequently introduced, yet it is never associated with feelings gloomy, or forbidding. Her piety was ardent, but invariably cheerful. Even at her advanced age she retained all her sprightliness. Writing to her friend Sir W. Pepy's, she thus amusingly describes her feelings. "Through the great mercy of God, I have recovered my health so far as to be enabled to resume my pursuits, and to receive my friends. My dear sister used to say, there were two great evils in the world—sin and bile: now, to say nothing of the former, the latter clings to me. The

liver is indeed my only seat of suffering. By the way, I pretend to have thrown light on a story of mythological antiquity, which has escaped all the classical commentators, and I give it you as an original discovery, *le voici*. Prometheus, it is said, was *chained* to Mount Caucasus, that is, he was *confined* to his bed. It being called a *rock* only means that it was a *hard* bed, not one of our luxurious beds of down. The vulture which fed upon his vitals was nothing but a bad liver case. Now as the use of calomel was probably at that time not introduced into the 'Pharmacopeia of Caucasus,' it is no wonder, that though the liver was continually *devoured*, it was never *destroyed*. Hercules, who at last killed the vulture, was, I presume some skilful physician, who had discovered some substitute for mercury, by which the bilious patient was, at the end of thirty years, delivered from his *hard* bed."

The innocent pleasantry of this playful ingenious allusion to a mythological tale, shows a sprightliness of mind seldom found at the advanced age of seventy-eight. In another letter, not long afterwards, she writes with equal vivacity to an esteemed friend: "What is become of you? Where are you? What are you doing? It would indeed be germane to the matter to put these interrogatories to me, as I have long been in your debt for a delightful letter. But there is a reason for your not asking me *where* I am, as I am sure to be found in the bow-window in my bed-chamber. It is now about two years since I have been down stairs, and more than four since I was in any house except my own. It is not that my locomotive powers are not equal to travel down stairs, but that this unmannerly summer made my good Dr. Carrick order me to run no risk. I have, however, a pleasant prison, and am not anxious for a gaol delivery. My health is much better, through the great mercy of God, than there was any human

probability it would ever be, with the exception of frequent salutary interruptions of bad nights. These are necessary to remind me that this is not my rest. I see a good deal of company in the middle of the day, but the *post* occupies and fatigues me more than my guests. If you saw my table, on most days, you would think that if I were not a minister of state, I was become at least a clerk in a public office. These petty businesses often prevent my writing to those dear friends with whom it would be my delight to have more intercourse. I find, however, a good deal of time to work with my *hands*, while Miss Frowd reads for the entertainment of my head. The learned labours of my knitting-needle are now accumulating, to be sent to America to the Missionary Society, who sell them there, and send the produce to the Barley Wood School at Ceylon. So that you see I am still good for something."

Allusion is here made to a project, which originated in America, of raising a fund to build and found a school in Ceylon, in honour of Mrs. More, to be called Barley Wood. They had succeeded in procuring a sufficient sum, by the sale of an engraving of Mrs. More's residence, published at New-York, to build the school, and they were proceeding with great spirit to raise the money required to complete the plan. The idea of having her name perpetuated with an institution for education, in this distant island, must have afforded the highest pleasure to one, who had devoted so large a portion of her time and property to this great object at home.

Selfishness is said to be the besetting vice of age, as levity and sensuality is of youth. In the majority of instances this is certainly the case; and even with the professedly pious the heart often contracts when it ought to dilate. To meet with individuals, who would think themselves insulted were the sincerity of their religion suspected, and yet who are ever

unwilling to promote any generous or benevolent object, is by no means uncommon : there cannot, however, be a disposition more at variance with Christianity. In the conduct of Mrs. More, there was nothing resembling it: her liberal mind was constantly devising liberal things. About this time, on hearing that a legacy of twenty guineas had been left her, as a mark of respect, by a dignitary of Lincoln Cathedral, she generously determined to expend it in redeeming two youthful slaves in the Burmese Empire.

The state of her mind at the close of 1823 she describes in a letter to Mr. Wilberforce. "My dear friend, I hear from others a favourable report of your health. I thank God for this comfort, amidst the sad reports I receive of other dear friends. The ranks of the righteous seem to be thinning sadly. That dear Mr. G—— should be taken in the midst of his usefulness, and I spared in the midst of my uselessness, is among the daily proofs we receive, that God's ways are not as our ways. Preparation is necessary for me, and therefore time is given me; yet, even now, my time is not so much my own as you would imagine. I have had too many cares and interruptions, and too little leisure and repose for age and sickness—too much of Martha, too little of Mary."

Through the winter and spring of 1824 Mrs. More's health continued sufficiently good to enable her to work with her hands, and occasionally to employ her pen. Writing to Lady Bathurst, she remarks : "Through the great mercy of my heavenly Father, I have been wonderfully carried through the vicissitudes of the weather during the last winter; and though I do not quit my apartment, yet I see a great deal of company. I envy those who are in London this week, which I call the saints' festival; so many distinguished

scholars and Christians will speak at the different religious and charitable public meetings, I hope with profit. As to my insignificant self, I can find sufficient employment, which if not splendid is not quite useless. At Bristol, Clifton, and Bath they have an annual bazaar for different charitable purposes. They are supplied with articles for sale by ladies who contribute different pieces of work, which are sold, and produce a considerable sum. You will see that in my old age, I am brought so low as to write halfpenny papers, I enclose you a specimen. Every year I write some such trifle as the enclosed. The ladies who conduct the bazaars get these paltry papers printed; sometimes on coloured paper; and by selling them for a shilling, twenty pounds has been collected in the year. All my leisure time I spend in knitting garters, and muffatees, a little decorated. These are disposed of to the lady customers, for five times their value, and bring in during the year no contemptible sum. I have of late lost so many of my contemporaries, particularly in the higher classes, that I am ready to ask with Dr. Johnson, Where is the world into which I was born? They taken—I spared—they of great importance in society, I of little or none. By thus extending my life, God has mercifully given me a longer space for preparation. May it not be given in vain!"

In July of this year, 1824, her health had so far improved as to enable her to entertain, at Barley Wood, the speakers who met to take part in the anniversary of the Wrington Bible Association, of which she was still the chief support. On that interesting occasion, though unable to attend the meeting, or even to dine with the guests, yet, at her request, the company adjourned into her room after dinner, where they spent several hours in most edifying conversation. Sir Thomas Acland and an American bishop were among the visitors. All were

pleased to perceive, by her striking and spirited remarks, that though she was in her seventy-ninth year, she had lost none of her characteristic animation. At parting, the bishop offered up a solemn prayer, and all present seemed delighted with the meeting.

The vigour of her mind on this occasion led her friends to anticipate the pleasure of soon again having the privilege of that unrestricted intercourse with her they had formerly enjoyed. Deeply, however, to their regret, it was not long before their hopes were blighted. Only a month afterwards she experienced another severe attack. In this new trial, her patience, her fortitude, and her presence of mind forsook her not. Instead of murmuring, she was thankful. She regarded her trials as needful preparations for heaven. Such were her conceptions of the goodness of God, and such the humbling views she had of herself, that she ever assigned as the reason her sufferings were greater than others, the greater need she stood in of purification, before she entered on her inheritance above. Amidst her severest sufferings she exclaimed, "All this, I know, is for the best. I am not yet prepared: I want a few more stripes, or I should not have them, for God does nothing without design."

She dwelt less upon the pain she had to endure, than upon the mercies which God had mingled with judgment. In reply to a friend who spoke much of the anguish she suffered, she remarked, "I wish to bear my dying testimony, that the mercies of God to me have always been greater than my sufferings. I reckon it a proof of his mercy to me, that for many years I have lost my taste and smell; both which were taken from me by a violent attack of fever. I once thought this an affliction, but having been compelled since almost perpetually to feed on drugs, I now reckon it one among my numerous mercies."

When suffering under an acute paroxysm of pain, she remarked to her attendant, "How delightful was the promise to the pious, that God should wipe away all tears from their eyes. It was cheering to reflect, not only that this would be done, but that God himself would do it."

After suffering severely for many weeks, she again gradually recovered—much to the surprise, but greatly to the joy of her friends. She had often been urged to select from her works, those parts which treated on the subject of devotion, and to publish them separately, in a small volume. Hitherto she had resisted their importunity; but it now occurred to her, that with some additional and connecting remarks, a useful, closet manual might be produced, on one of the most important branches of piety. She commenced the work before she was sufficiently recovered to leave her bed, and by the close of 1824 sent it to the press, under the appropriate title of 'The Spirit of Prayer.' A large edition was sold off on its first appearance, and by the end of three months it had reached the third edition.

From her esteemed correspondent Sir W. Pepys, who was some two or three years more advanced into the vale of life than herself, and who, like her, though perhaps not to the same degree, felt the hallowing influence of piety, she received the following pleasing testimony of its merits: "I have just finished your 'Spirit of Prayer,' for which I give you my sincerest thanks. I have told my family, what, if said only to you, might savour too much of compliment—that I do not recollect to have ever risen from a book which gave me greater *pleasure*. I said actual *pleasure*, not merely instruction, or useful exhortation, but positive delight. Such an animated spirit of piety runs through the whole of it, that not to have greatly relished it, would have impeached one's

taste, even more than one's principles. I hope to have it always upon my table, and to read it over and over again, as long as I shall wish to cherish the spirit of piety; which I pray to God may be as long I live."

This elegant and accomplished scholar adds, in language alike honourable to his heart and his head: "I feel that I have so little concern with this world, and so much with the next, that I am apt to reproach myself if I bestow much time on any book that has not some tendency, at least, to prepare me for the awful change I must soon expect to undergo. Dr. Doddridge on the words, 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' recommends that reply to those who lose their time on the curiosities of literature, quoting the last words of a great scholar, '*Heu! vitam perdidi operose nihil agendo.*' This, my dear friend, will never rise up as a just accusation against you. You have employed those brilliant talents which God has bestowed on you, so much to his glory, and the good of your fellow-creatures, I sometimes compare you with those who have attained the summit of earthly renown, and ask myself which I had rather be at this period of my life. I need not tell you the answer, which would be attended with still more self-reproach than it is, did I not feel that the mediocrity of my own talents exempts me, in some degree, from much of that responsibility which is attached to such as yours. But this is too fearful a subject to dwell upon, for we have all so much to be forgiven, that it is idle to compare the quantities. May God in his mercy receive us both, through our only Mediator and Advocate."

Another of her cotemporaries, who was fast sinking into the vale of life, thus bears his testimony to the merits of this production: "I have perused with interest, and if not also with profit the fault is all my own, your 'Spirit of Prayer.' It was well, instead

of engaging in any thing savouring of novelty or originality, to select and place in the public hand that part of the spiritual armour, which is so prominently necessary to bring into use and efficacy all the other parts of the sacred panoply, which you have been labouring so long to recommend for the purpose of Christian warfare. May the Divine blessing rest upon the whole, and render it prosperous in accomplishing the objects for which it is intended. I congratulate you that your salvation is now so much nearer than when you believed; that your warfare and your toils are approaching to a close; and that you are soon to enter into that rest which remains for the people of God. I might safely, in your case, speak of those heavenly records, and of that glory, honour, and immortality, which is reserved for those who patiently continue in well doing, not for their own, but for the sake of their Saviour; but I know you would not like me to dwell on these, in reference especially to yourself, whatever I may think and hope. Yet surely that rest which I first spoke of, which even the lowest rank of Christians have in prospect, is in itself a delightful privilege. To have done for ever with sin as well as suffering, with Satan and his temptations—with that world which notwithstanding all its gratifications and indulgences, is still a wicked and an ensnaring world; even these negative blessings more than counterbalance all the trials of life. But what are these compared with the positive felicity of waking up after the Divine likeness, of worshipping before the throne of God and the Lamb, of being for ever with the Lord Jesus to behold his glory and to witness his triumphs?"

From many other individuals Mrs. More received the most pleasing testimonials to the excellence of the little volume; but we can only find room for the following extract from a letter received from her valued

friend, Mr. Stevens, the indefatigable and able advocate of Negro emancipation. The sterling excellence of the remarks will be deemed a sufficient excuse for its length. "I most sincerely congratulate you, my dear madam, on this very appropriate and happy finish of your labours. Of all practical subjects prayer is the best. I would rather have prayer without faith or love, than faith and love if they could exist without prayer; for without prayer these graces may soon be lost; but where there is a spirit of devotion they will not long be wanting. Of this, I am certain, that the man who persists in prayer, will not entertain any doubt whatever of the great truths of religion: he will learn, from the impressive, decisive testimony of his own experience, that verily there is a God that governs the world; that he rewards what is right in their conduct, and punishes what is wrong; and that he is chiefly intent upon the elevation and purification of their natures; though it is often under circumstances, and by means which make a future retributory state absolutely necessary, for the vindication of his justice, mercy, and goodness. But the effect of prayer does not end here. Among all the proofs we have, that Christianity came from God, I know of none so strong, judging from the force of it on my own mind, as the wonderful correspondence of the gospel with all that prayer and experience teach us of the way of God with men. Christ taught us all those wonderful truths which prayer and experience confirm: He taught us, moreover, what they alone could never teach, but what falls in admirably with the discoveries they make, and solves the difficulties with which they would otherwise be attended. He it was that gave us this telescope for the discovery of unseen truths. He was our Galileo, as well as our Newton, in heavenly things; for he taught us to pray; and

there is no duty which, both by precept and example, he so carefully inculcated. I have sometimes put this argument to philosophical unbelievers: 'You admit the existence of lately-discovered planets, which you, yourself, have never seen, and you would think it absurd to doubt them. Now, you will find no man who has long been in the habit of private prayer, who will not tell you, that he has had many decisive proofs that his prayers were heard, and practically answered, in the occurrences of life; and, though not always in the way he wished, yet often very strikingly so, and almost invariably, when he has prayed earnestly, in a way which, sooner or later, he has discovered to be the most to his advantage. Much as Christians may differ on other points, in this they are all agreed, that things have never gone well with them through the day, when their morning prayers have been cold or languid. To suppose this to be the dream of superstition, is more irrational than it would be to suppose that all the observers of Georgium Sidus have been deceived by meteors. To object that the majority of mankind, who live in the neglect of prayer, have had no such evidence of its efficacy, would be as idle as to object that the planets, which can be perceived only by the aid of proper glasses, have never been seen at all: the scepticism is as unphilosophical in one case as in the other. If we give our confidence to Herschel, when, announcing his discoveries, he tells us to look, and we shall see, shall we refuse it to Christ, who reveals to us a Providence, without the notice of which a sparrow falls not to the ground; and who, when teaching us that God governs the world, says, 'Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you?'"

During the whole of 1825 Mrs. More's health

was better than it had been for many years: her spirits continued good, and she still took the liveliest interest in all that related to the great objects to which she had devoted her life. Though she could not personally inspect her schools, they were still managed under her own direction, as was the distribution of her annual bounty to the poor, whose wants she still enquired after, and was pleased to relieve: but the pleasure she enjoyed in these labours of love were embittered by the loss of her oldest and most attached friends. Writing to Mr. Wilberforce, she remarks: "My health, through the great mercy of God, is marvellous; but I am feeling the common affliction of all who live to an advanced age, that almost all my contemporaries are dropping before me. In one month I can reckon the Bishop of Salisbury, my valuable friend Jones, and a loss that has afflicted me very deeply—that of Sir W. Pepys. We had lived, in undiminished friendship, nearly fifty years: he was a scholar and a gentleman, and one of the principal ornaments of the select society in which I passed so many pleasant days. Fifteen or twenty years ago, when I gave up London entirely, we continued our intercourse by letters, and I had the great satisfaction of perceiving his gradual advancement in piety. I had, some time previously, made him a present of a Bible, marking those portions on which I wished him more particularly to dwell: he studied it constantly. His letters, for several years past, without losing any of that classic elegance for which they were before remarkable, were characterised by a spirit of devotion truly gratifying. His family character was admirable: his sons almost worshipped him. For the last seven years he was a bountiful benefactor to my poor, and contributed liberally in support of my schools. I have no doubt he is accepted through Him who loved him, and

gave himself for him. The death of the venerable clergyman of Shipham, Mr. Jones, who, in sixty-one years, had never missed his Sunday duty but four times, is a loss which I deeply regret. A more exemplary minister I never knew. As to myself, I think I was never more hurried, more engaged, or more loaded with cares, than at present: I do not mean afflictions, but a total want of that article for which I built my house and planted my grove—retirement: it is a thing I only know by name. I saw eighty persons last week, and see nearly as many every week. I know not how to help it. If my guests are old, I see them out of respect; if young, I hope I may do them a little good: if they come from a distance, I feel as if I ought to see them on that account; if near home, I cannot send them away, as my neighbours would be jealous, were I to admit strangers and exclude them. But my *levee* is from twelve to three o'clock; so that I get my mornings and evenings to myself, except now and then, when an old friend steals in quietly for a night or two."

It is to be regretted that Mrs. More did not possess, or, if she possessed, did not exert sufficient firmness of mind to refuse admission to more visitors than were consistent with her domestic comfort. For want of this, what might have been to her, at this period of her life especially, a source of enjoyment, became a scene of bustle the most perplexing. To be honoured with the occasional calls of a few well-selected, intelligent friends, sweetens domestic life; but to be incessantly subject to the intrusive visits of strangers, prompted only by a desire to gratify vain curiosity, is most vexatious and annoying. It was, doubtless, Mrs. More's amiable disposition, and her extreme reluctance to do any thing that might be construed by any one into unkindness, that led

her thus to sacrifice her own comfort, to gratify the curiosity of strangers. Nothing, however, would have been more easy than a respectful intimation that such visits were not desired, and the denial in one case would have operated as a check in most others.

CHAPTER XX.

Unimpaired mental vigour—Opinion of the Apocrypha—Liberality of sentiments—Interestiag interview with Rowland Hill—Jeu-d'esprit—Usefulness, and extensive circulation of her works—Slight occasional depression—Solitary musings—Promptitude of conduct—Complaint of interruption—Readiness to assist the needy—Loss of Christian friends—Prodigality of her domestics—Painful results—Removal from Barley Wood.

Mrs. More entered on her eighty-first year with no apparent diminution either of her mental vigour, or of that cheerful vivacity for which she had ever been distinguished. Though she seemed conscious herself of the enfeebling effects of age, and frequently adverted, both in her conversation and correspondence, to the symptoms of decay she felt, physically and mentally, yet it was only in the former respect it could be perceived by others; in the latter, no indications of it were visible. Writing to the Rev. D. Wilson, in the autumn of 1825, she gives the following playful description of her feelings: "If ingratitude be worse than the sin of witchcraft, then must I be worse than the witch of Endor. I may say, with truth, what a great man once said of himself without truth, that I spend my life in laboriously doing nothing. Did you think it possible, that a resemblance could be found between me and Grotius? or, to go on quoting, I resemble Macbeth, not, indeed, murdering my king, but my time, for,

> 'Like a man on double business bent,
> I stand in doubt which I shall first achieve,
> And so do neither.'

Now that I have nearly exhausted my whole stock of learning upon you, I will endeavour to extract plain matter-of-fact out of my own head, or rather out of my own heart, for that I take to be the seat of gratitude. But I cannot say that I am going, even now, to be original, because I have frequently, afore-time, had occasion to express to you my thanks for your repeated kindnesses. I fear it has been too much my practice to try to appear better than I am; yet I must do myself the justice, in the present instance, to say that I appear worse, as the invaluable presents you kindly sent me were not received till some weeks after the time you forwarded them. Miss Frowd reads to me one of your sermons every evening, and we find that increase of appetite doth grow with what it feeds on. Another quotation! I really cannot help it, though I may truly say that, for a very long season,

> 'Verse I abjured, nor will forgive that friend,
> Who in my hearing shall a rhyme commend.'"

In the same playful strain, though with becoming seriousness, she adverts to the dispute which had then arisen among the friends of the Bible Society, respecting the Apocrypha: "I declare, seriously, in prose and truth, that this unhappy schism in the Bible Society afflicts me by day, and keeps me awake by night. I know not how you, my dear sir, feel on this all-important subject, and perhaps I may be presumptuous in setting the opinion of an obscure, ignorant person like myself, against that of so many wise and good men. My two quarto Bibles, printed at our two universities, have both the Apocrypha; but who ever thought of reading it?

> 'Perhaps to be forbid, may tempt one
> To wish for what one never dreamt on.'

I wish these rhymes did not put themselves in my way; but what can I do? I heartily wish the

Apocrypha was out of every Bible; but if the Papists will not take a Bible without it, is there any comparison between having a Bible with it, and having no Bible at all? The one is like a slight disease, compared with, perhaps, death—

'Death, unrepealable, eternal death.'"

The stagnation in trade which occurred in the winter of 1825 was felt most severely in all the mining districts, and especially in the parishes where Mrs. More's schools had been established. She sympathized with the poor most deeply in their distress, and did every thing in her power to afford them relief. She wrote to her wealthy, benevolent friends, on their behalf, and had the pleasure to receive several liberal contributions. In a letter to Lady Sparrow, at the close of 1825, in which she modestly solicited her ladyship's aid in this benevolent object, she thus describes her feelings: "My own health, through the great mercy of God, has been better than for some years past. It is matter of wonder as well as gratitude, that this should be the case at my advanced age, especially as I have now as much employment, and am as much fatigued, as at any former period of my life. But, though my health is good, my mind is in a continual state of anxiety for the distress which surrounds me. You have heard me speak of the two mining villages, where I have had a school for nearly fifty years, of about three hundred, young and old. This gives me a peculiar interest in the wants of these poor people. If I were not so old, and did I not look on myself as on the very verge of eternity, not expecting to pass through another cold winter, I could not do what I have lately done, and am now doing, for these suffering people. Their number amounts to twelve hundred, and not one among them is able to afford another the smallest relief. If, my dear lady,

you will spare a small gratuity, I shall most thankfully dispose of it. Pray pardon this freedom. How many years is it since we have met? O, what delight would it afford me once more to see you! But we must content ourselves with praying for each other, till, in God's appointed time, we meet in that blessed land, where there is neither sorrow nor separation."

Though Mrs. More had always adhered conscientiously to the Established Church, of which she ever avowed herself from principle a member, yet such was her liberality of sentiment, and so entirely was she divested of every thing like bigotry, that her writings were read with almost equal pleasure by all denominations of Christians. Eminently pious and talented individuals, to whatever Christian community they belonged, were sure of a reception at Barley Wood, equally cordial and affectionate. Where true piety existed, she enquired not with which class its possessor associated. On one occasion, she writes, "Daniel Wilson has been staying here several days and nights. O, how you would enjoy his devout energy, the heart-felt, and heart-awakening piety of his prayers, and the interesting manner in which he expounds the Scriptures!" Shortly afterwards, she says, "Among my too numerous visitors, I have the pleasure to say, that there are many who are among the excellent of the earth. Early this morning arrived dear old Rowland Hill, and another saintly visitor." At the same time, Dr. Marchman, the Baptist Missionary, paid Mrs. More a visit, and the interesting interview between these distinguished individuals is thus affectingly narrated by an eye-witness, "You cannot conceive how much we were delighted with Rowland Hill: instead of a coarse, quaint being, disposed to deal out his witty sarcasms against all who were of his particular genius, we found him

a mild, mellowed Christian, with a liberality of sentiment that quite astonished us. His conversation was so truly pious, so seasoned with point and humour, and a delightful oddity peculiar to himself, that Mrs. More, and all present, were beyond measure entertained, and not a little edified. So unconsciously did the evening glide away, that the three hours he spent with us did not appear more than half-an-hour. We talked of every body from John Bunyan to John Locke; and Mr. Hill really showed that he possessed great discrimination and tact in character. But the most beautiful feature in the character, of this veteran, was the spirit of Christian charity, which was eminently conspicuous in all he said. I cannot express to you how interesting it was to see those two venerable servants of God, who both seemed to be meetened for their future rest, greeting one another for their first and probably for their last time on this side Jordan, preparatory to consummation of an eternal union and friendship, in the regions of endless purity and happiness. Perhaps two individuals could hardly be found, who in their day had done more good, than Hannah More and Rowland Hill. Both had then exceeded the age of fourscore, both retained health of body and vigour of intellect, both were on the extreme verge of eternity, waiting for the gladdening message, 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.' Mr. Hill concluded this interesting visit by offering up a solemn and most appropriate prayer. I know not, that upon any occasion I have been more gratified."

The poetic cast of Mrs. More's mind, even at this advanced age, and the facility with which she could call it into exercise on any occasion, though she had confined herself, for many years, almost entirely to prose, will be seen by the following *j'eu-d'esprit*, which she spoke about this time, extempore, and af-

terwards wrote, on rather a ludicrous subject. It was sent in a letter to Mr. Hart Davis, and she thus amusingly accounts for its origin: "I fear you will say I am too old to write nonsense, but I plead in excuse, that I am approaching my second childhood, when nonsense is almost as pardonable as in the *first*. Such as it is, it is spick and span new. The scene which elicited it, having just passed under my window, the foolish thought struck me, and except some trifling additions made in committing it to paper, you have it as my friend took it down. It was spoken, not written, on seeing the body of a large pig which had been butchered, dragged up the hill.

"The saddest sight that 'ere was seen
Was piggy rolling up the green!
Though dragged, he still would roll alone,
Downward like Sisyphus's stone.
This pig, as good as 'ere was sold,
Was worth—not quite his weight in gold.
That pork's unwholesome, doctors tell us,
Though of the fact I'm somewhat jealous,
And I believe, beyond all question,
Bacon is sovereign for digestion;
For this one cause among a few,
I'm glad I was not born a Jew.
No quadruped like piggy, claims
To give his flesh such various names,
The calf and sheep, half starve the glutton,
By yielding only veal and mutton,
While all extol the liberal swine,
For griskin and the savory chine.
How often does the brawny flitch,
Adorn the table and *enrich*?
The stately ham and rasher small,
Are liked in every state, by all,
Who will confess they see no good in
The poignant sausage or black-pudding?
The sparerib, sweet-bone, ears, and snout,
My bill of fare will quite make out;
For I disdain my song to close
By stooping to the pettitoes.
He ne'er was seen to dance a jig,
Though a genteel and graceful pig;
Yet when he round my field would prance,
It might be called a country dance.
Those *men* who dancing lives have led,
Are worse than nothing when they're dead;
While piggy's goodness ne'er appears,
Till closed his eyes and deaf his ears.
Though feeding spoilt his shape and beauty,
Yet feeding was in him a duty;

In spite of this reproach or that,
'Twas his sole duty to grow fat.
Death was to him no awful sentence,
No need for sorrow or repentance.
How many a gourmond stout and big,
Might envy thy last hour, O pig!
From my Stye,

Barley Wood, March 16, 1826."

The highest pleasure an author can receive, whose productions have been composed to promote the public good, is to witness their extensive circulation. It is affecting to see, as we sometimes do, the sudden removal of the man of piety and genius, just after he has produced, perhaps by some mighty effort, some work calculated to benefit and enlighten the world. One cannot help regretting, firmly as his faith may be fixed in the reality of a future state, and well grounded as may be his convictions of the deceased's happiness, that he lived not to see the triumph of his principles. Mrs. More was not denied this pleasure, she had the gratification to learn that her works were read with great delight in many parts of the world. In a letter, dated April 1826, she alludes to it with characteristic humility. "My dear and very kind friends, many people you know, who appear wicked to others are very righteous in their own eyes. Now as to myself, I not only appear to you a monster of ingratitude, but I feel and fairly acknowledge that I appear so to myself. And this in more ways than one. That the most interesting letter I received from you, should have been so shamefully neglected by me, is crime sufficient; but how is the offence aggravated by my remaining silent, and apparently insensible to the great honour dear Mr. Huber has done me, and the great obligations he has laid upon me, by undertaking the laborious work of translating my little volume into French. He is such a consummate master of both languages, that I am persuaded it will be as perfectly executed, as 'Cœlebs' was. I really feel more of gratitude to this very kind and able friend

than I can express. I shall be much gratified with Madame Neckar's critique, and hope she will not be sparing of her censure of the author, whatever she may say of the translator. Pray assure this amiable and afflicted lady that I truly sympathize with her in her various trials; but remind her, at the same time, of a truth, which she knows, that 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth:' and that, 'though chastening is not now joyous, but grievous, yet it afterwards yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.' I long to see myself again in my French dress. This little book, and my 'Practical Piety,' have just now been translated into Dutch. You take so kind and lively an interest in my concerns, that you will forgive the egotism, when I tell you, that six thousand copies of the 'Spirit of Prayer' were sold within the year; and the sixteenth large edition of 'Cœlebs,' and the fourteenth of 'Practical Piety,' have been lately published. I fear you will think me very vain, if I go on to say, that the principal bookseller at New York lately assured me, that he had printed and sold thirty editions of 'Cœlebs.' He added, that it had, in his estimation, done more good in America than any other of my works, because it was more read by worldly people than the books I had written of a more professedly religious character. I dare not look back on what I have written, having *never*, I hope, said so much of my writings before."

From a letter of Mrs. More's to the Rev. D. Wilson, dated August, 1826, inclosing to him the following poetical description of her feelings at the time, in reply to one in which he had complained of occasional depression, it appears, that though she usually enjoyed, even at her advanced age, great energy, yet she sometimes felt dispirited. "You must not fancy that I am grown poetical in my old age; I have long abjured all attempts at works of imagina-

tion. My only youthful attachment, which still exists in its full force, is a passion for scenery, raising flowers, and landscape, in which I can still indulge in some measure, as far as opening a walk from my window, among a little grove of trees planted twenty-four years ago. I wish you would come and see how I flourish in my small territory. A little change of scene and a little journey would do you good, and I should be quite happy if you and yours would spend two or three days here. But I am running away from my object, which is, that I have scribbled the enclosed rhymes, in a state of mind not very different from that which you describe. Perhaps you will not be displeased at the similarity of our sentiments. You will be so good as not to let this bagatelle go out of your hands. After all that religion can do, and has done, with respect to our feelings, we may yet say, with Dr. Young,

> 'Go bid physicians preach, our veins to temper,
> And with an argument new set a pulse.'

When you think of one who stands peculiarly in need of the prayers of her Christian friends, think, I beseech you, of me.

SOLITARY MUSINGS.

"Lord, when dejected I appear,
And love is half absorbed in fear,
E'en then I know I'm not forgot,
Thou'rt present, though I see thee not;
Thy boundless mercies still the same,
Though I am cold, nor feel the flame;
Though dull and hard my sluggish sense,
Faith still maintains its evidence.
O, would thy cheering beams so shine,
That I might always feel thee mine!
Yet though a cloud may sometimes rise,
And dim the brightness of the skies;
By faith thy goodness I will bless,
I shall be safe, though comfortless;
Still, still my grateful soul shall melt,
At what in brighter days I felt.
O wayward heart! thine is the blame,
Though I may change, God is the same.
Not feebler faith, nor colder prayer,
My state and sentence shall declare;

Nor nerves nor feelings shall decide,
By safer signs I shall be tried.
Is the fix'd tenor of my mind,
To Christ and righteousness inclin'd?
For sin is my contrition deep,
For past offences do I weep?
Do I submit my stubborn will,
To Him who guides and guards me still?
Then shall my peaceful bosom prove
That God, not loving, is still love."

But these attacks of depression were of rare occurrence with Mrs. More, and were seldom known to exist by her attendants. Up to this advanced age, she was cheerful and lively, though she had, about this time, made some painful discoveries of the misconduct of her domestics, whom she had chiefly entrusted with the management of her household affairs. That her understanding still retained all its power, will be seen by the following remarks she made in reply to an intimation which Mr. Wilberforce had given her, that he should retire from public life: "Your kind and interesting letter cheered my heart, and put me in more humour with myself than it found me. It brought back former days to my mind. I, too, who am much older than you are, may truly say, that I have not one contemporary left. My youthful associates, the Johnsons, the Garricks, the Burkes, the Bryants, the Reynolds's, &c., I do not reckon, as they were much older than myself: of my second set, the Bishop of Durham and Lady Cremorne were the last, both ninety-four; of your period (alas! poor H. Thornton!) there remain, yourself, (to me a host,) the Gisbornes, the Babingtons, my old accomplished friend, (now new neighbour,) the Bishop of Bristol, &c. Say not that you shall have nothing to do in your retirement from public life: I can point out to you, my dear friend, employment not less important than that in which you have spent so many days and nights. You can, and you must, write the history of your own life. Such a work would be sure to embrace three

great classes of readers—the fashionable, the religious, and the political. You, who were so long the intimate friend of the first minister in the world, might introduce such a proportion of public and political remark as would attract the worldly, who might thus be seduced to read the abundant instruction of the more serious pages. Thus they will meet with what will benefit their souls, while they look for nothing less. You lament the loss of much time by pausing too long, and making too much preparation before you begin to set about any thing. My fault has been of a directly contrary character. In avoiding Scylla, I have fallen upon Charybdis. I have such a horror of delay, that I have called myself, and am now called, the ultra anti-procrastinator. Though I have not done *much*, yet, with a sickly life, and an annual dangerous fever, of long duration, which I have had till within the last two years, had I been hesitating and considerate I should have done nothing. My thick volume, 'Moral Sketches,' was first thought of in January, entirely written, printed, and published by the end of the ensuing August. The following month dear Patty died. Could I have foreseen this, or had I delayed the work, it would never have been written. I do not mean that it would have been any loss to the world, but that it would never have existed. So much in favour of rashness."

Mrs. More's constitutional ardour, and quickness of apprehension, led her to execute promptly whatever she undertook, and to speak in commendation of similar conduct in others. She could not, however, have intended to insinuate that there had been any want of promptitude, energy, or perseverance in the public conduct of Mr. Wilberforce, whose untired diligence and indefatigable zeal in the great work to which he had devoted his life, she had repeatedly admired. She might, indeed, suspect that,

in his retirement, he would be in danger of losing that vigour for which he had been distinguished. But it was not that wise, cautious deliberation, without which no work of importance can be undertaken and accomplished, that she censured; it was that vacillating indecision of character, which plans much and executes nothing.

Mrs. More's health, though it was still so delicate, and so liable to variations, that she could not leave her apartments, continued sufficiently good to enable her to receive visitors; and as she could not be prevailed upon, though she often found it most fatiguing, to refuse admission to any, lest she should lose an opportunity of dropping some useful remark, the visitors to Barley Wood were as numerous as ever. In a letter to the Rev. T. Gisborne, dated the last day of February, 1827, she writes: "I seem to have survived scores of friends, much younger and much healthier than myself. I am now eighty-two years old, and have had less interruption from sickness than at any period in the last two years. I have been setting down the names of all the physicians I have had;—not one survives. I never had so little leisure in my life, now that I ought to have the most. Letters which I cannot answer; applications which I cannot comply with; company which I cannot refuse.

Besides the interruptions to which Mrs. More was subject, from the number of her visitors, there were others, which she felt even more annoying. She was continually receiving applications, chiefly from entire strangers, to aid them, by her patronage, in the attainment of some object of which they were in pursuit; or to oblige them with some favour, to which they had often not the slightest claim. Alluding to a circumstance of this kind, she playfully writes: "Before I thank you for your very interesting letter, I must unburthen myself of a comedy, or rather a farce. The other day I received a parcel

from Wrington, bundled up in a coarse brown paper. I found it was a Latin Essay on 'Homer's Iliad:' the very name of the author was in Latin, just as Monsieur de Thou styled himself, 'Thuanus.' A short letter was enclosed, saying, 'I am tutor to Mr. ——'s children, and beg leave to dedicate this work to Mrs. More, desiring her inspection of it.' I was out of breath in my haste to decline both honours, deeply sensible as I was, and naturally must be, of such a distinction. I gave him some friendly advice, as to the great expense of printing, and of the probability that he would sustain a heavy loss, unless he were sure of an extensive sale, which was very uncertain. Bear in mind, it is Mr. —— the little shopkeeper at ———, to whose sons he is tutor."

In another letter, she alludes, in a manner equally playful, to the same subject. "It is well that Miss Frowd has left me a little space, for I have little to say, and little time in which to say it. There are three littles for your three greats, if there were such a word, would not more than express my affection for you both. I have too many cares at that age, when the grasshopper is a burden: I have *many* grasshoppers, and seem to have less time, and more labour, than ever I had in the busiest periods of active life, and half my interruptions are of a petty kind; albums and autographs, &c. Did I ever tell you, that R—— I—— said to me, that if he were engaged to the prettiest woman in the world, he would break off the match if she kept an album; 'it is,' said he, 'the essence of folly and vanity; a vile way of seeming literary.' He is a coarse man, but very clever. To tell you the truth, however, I am really half-distracted by a number of daily applications, which I do not trouble you with naming. I am often tempted to wish I had sixty pounds a-year to buy bread and cheese, and then, perhaps, they

would leave me to pursue my narrow way in quiet."

These complaints of interruption, arose not from unkindness of feeling, or unwillingness to oblige her friends, when it could be done with any degree of comfort to herself. The fact is, that the applications to her were so numerous as to call for the sacrifice of nearly all her time, and to leave her not a moment's opportunity of quietude and rest, in a state of health, feeble and fluctuating, and at a time of life when seclusion and comfort are especially needed. Modest and humble talent, struggling with difficulties, she invariably assisted with the greatest readiness, however much she might be engaged. That numerous class of well-meaning individuals, who are ever ready, with the best intentions, to honour talents, though their visits were often not a little vexatious, she ever treated with kindness. But her greatest annoyance arose from the intrusive visits of the vain and superficial, whose arrogant pretensions she found most vexatious. Individuals of eminent attainments have often complained of the same evil as a serious inconvenience.

With Mrs. More's very extensive circle of friends, it is not surprising that she had frequent occasion to sympathize with some among them for the loss of some dear relative: this she was ever ready to do, in an excellent and Christian spirit, when she thought it could be done with a good effect. On the death of an amiable lady, in the prime of life, the daughter of Sir Edmund Hartopp, she writes, "May 9, 1827.—My dear Sir Edmund, my heart has ached for you and your dear lady; but I have forborne to express the deep sympathy I have felt, because I did not dare intrude on the Sabbath of your sorrows, which I considered sacred. It is among the imperfections of human things, that while we can feel much for the afflictions of our friends,

we cannot diminish them. I both admired and loved the inestimable treasure you have lost: it is a fresh illustration of Cowper's remark, that

'God moves in a mysterious way.'

A life so useful, a character so every way, not merely amiable, but estimable, with all the means, and the will to do so much good, and to be a blessing to all around her, taken away in the prime of her life, and in the midst of her usefulness, is a lesson more striking and awakening than a hundred sermons. We know, my dear sir, that the Judge of all the earth cannot but do right: yet, is it not among the secret things of God, that while this charming lady is taken from us so early, I, who am of so little use, am preserved, through what Pope calls,—

'That long disease, my life,'

to my eighty-third year?"

Up to very nearly this period, Mrs. More enjoyed much her delightful retreat at Barley Wood: it had grown into luxuriance and beauty under her own eye: it was endeared to her by a thousand tender associations: there she had closed the eyes and received the last parting views of her beloved sisters, and there she had doubtless fully expected to close her own. Circumstances, however, now occurred in her domestic affairs, which ultimately led to her removal.

Some idea may be formed of the deep regret she must have felt on being compelled to quit this beloved spot, by the following interesting description of it from the pen of a lady, who in the spring of 1826 paid her a visit. "Before we came in sight," she says, "of the little town of Wrington, we entered an avenue thickly bordered with luxuriant evergreens: these led directly to Barley Wood Cottage. As we drew nearer, a thick hedge

of roses, jessamine, woodbine, and clematis fringed the smooth, sloping lawn on one side, laurels and lauristinas, in full bloom, were on the other. From the shrubbery, the ground ascends, and is well wooded, by flowing larch, deep cypress, spreading chesnut, and some lordly forest-trees. Amid this melange, rustic seats and temples occasionally peep forth. Two monuments are particularly conspicuous; one to the memory of Porteus, the other to that of Locke. I was much struck with the air of affectionate kindness with which the old lady welcomed me to Barley Wood: there was something of that courtliness about it, which one sometimes reads of, but seldom meets with. Her dress was of light green Venetian silk: a richly embroidered yellow crape shawl enveloped her shoulders, and a pretty net cap, tied with white satin riband, completed the costume. Her figure is singularly petite; but, to have any idea of the expression of her countenance, you must imagine the small withered face of a woman of fourscore, with dark eyes, brilliant, flashing, and penetrating, sparkling from object to object, with all the fire and energy of youth, and smiling welcome on all around: these you must imagine shaded, but not obscured, by long, and perfectly white eyelashes. After a good deal of conversation on indifferent topics, she commenced showing us her curiosities, which were numerous and peculiar: among them were gods, given up by the South Sea islanders to our missionaries: fragments of Oriental manuscript; a choice, but not numerous collection of books, chiefly in Italian, English, and French. Each of these languages she speaks with nearly equal fluency. There was a large collection of autographs, containing her correspondence with Garrick, Johnson, Burke, Reynolds, Porteus; and manuscripts, also, in the hand-writing of Lord Chesterfield, Chatterton, Addison, Swift, Atterbury, Sir

Richard Steele, &c. One that particularly interested me, was a letter from Prince Edward to Queen Elizabeth. 'I will now,' she said, 'show you some monuments of the days of my wickedness;' on this she produced a play-bill, on which Miss More's new tragedy of 'Percy' was announced more than half a century ago. She looked to me, at that moment, as a resurrection from the dead; more particularly when she added, 'Johnson, Burke, Garrick, Reynolds, Porteus—all—all the associates of my youth, are gone! nor is there one among them, whom I delight in praising, more than David Garrick. In his house I made my entrance into life, and a better conducted house I never saw. I have never been at a play since his death: I could not bear it.' She told me it was nine years since she had been down-stairs, but added, laughing, 'I am like Alexander Selkirk, monarch of all I survey: every tree on this little domain was planted by my own hands, or under my special direction.' While she said this, her spirit within her seemed as cheerful as if the blood of eighteen, instead of eighty, circulated in her veins: she was, indeed, a woman who had lived to good purpose, and I bade her adieu with regret."

The idea of quitting a spot so delightful, formed by her own hand, to her own taste, and evidently prized by her very highly, must have been, under any circumstances, severely trying; but to be almost driven out of it, at her advanced age, not by any act of her own, but by the gross misconduct of her dependents, was much more distressing. The circumstances which led to this sad removal, were the excessive prodigality and wasteful expenditure of those with whom she had entrusted the management of her domestic concerns. Taking advantage of the confidence she had unsuspiciously reposed in them, which they could do the more readily, because of her

long confinement to her own apartments, they had carried on, almost from the death of her sister, a gradually increasing system of most wanton extravagance. She had some intimation of it, and had made a few feeble efforts to prevent it, by mildly reproving the delinquents: but perceiving it to have no effect, under a conviction, apparently, that it was inevitable, she patiently submitted to its continuance, instead of firmly and instantly insisting upon its correction, by taking the only steps which could have insured it—the punishment of the culprits. Her amiable disposition prevented her from doing this, till their dismission or her entire ruin were the only alternatives left. That she should have allowed the continuance of such a system of misrule, had long been a subject of regret and surprise to all her friends. They saw what must be the result, if her life was protracted; but, from a false and censurable delicacy, none ventured to mention it to her whose substance was thus rapidly expending.

It is not in the nature of prodigality to correct itself; excess in one thing leads to excess in another. The indulgence of extravagant habits in trifles, makes way for its indulgence in every thing. It was remarkably so in this case. Mrs. More's servants continued their lavish expenditure, till at length it became the topic of general remark. Perceiving that her reputation was likely to suffer by its continuance, her friends named it to her. She was astonished, and exceedingly grieved. She knew that her servants had been less careful than she wished them to be, but had no idea that they had proceeded to such lengths. At first, she was at a loss what to do. She was aware that her expenditure, for the last year or two, had considerably exceeded her income, which had led her to entertain thoughts of selling the reversion of Barley Wood. In a letter to Mr. Wilberforce a short time previous

to this disclosure, she writes, "Do you know that I am very desirous of selling Barley Wood,—the reversion I mean. I am unwilling to advertise as I do not like publicity. Within the last two years, I have spent nearly one thousand pounds in enlarging and embellishing the grounds, and have put the house into complete repair. All my demands, both of family and charity, are so much enlarged, that I have exceeded my income in the last two years by three hundred pounds. I have sunk a little of my four per cents. As Pope says, 'it is pleasanter to give than to bequeath.' The worst is, that I am still alive; but though not in bad health, yet at the age of eighty-two I consider myself on the very verge of eternity; so that though I must unavoidably lose by the sale, yet the purchaser must soon become the possessor."

Immediately, however, on the painful disclosure of her domestics' conduct being made, Mrs. More saw that the sale of the reversion merely would not be sufficient to meet the case. She perceived that the obstacles to her longer continuance at Barley Wood, with the alteration which she now determined to make in her domestic establishment, would be greater than those connected with giving it up entirely. Painful, therefore, as were the thoughts of leaving a spot to which she had become so strongly attached, she determined at once so to do, whatever feeling it might cost her. She instantly dismissed those servants who had squandered her property. In a short time she disposed of her beloved estate, and removed into a comfortable house taken for her in Windsor Terrace, Clifton.

To an intimate friend she thus discloses the state of her mind on this trying occasion: "Were I to write to you as often as I have some new favour to thank you for, I should be always writing, and you always reading. This heavy blow has quite over-

whelmed me. I strive, and earnestly pray, for Divine support and direction; but such is the variety of difficulties which await me for the next month that I sink under the thought of them. I bless God I slept last night, though I may say, like the disciples, it was from sorrow. You *must* indeed, my dear friends, you must come, and advise which of the painful paths before me I must pursue. It will break my heart if you refuse this, perhaps my last request. I want to consult with you, what gentleman I shall get to stay with me in the dreaded moment of separation. The shocking conduct of the people below, has, I am told, been the subject of discourse in the whole neighbourhood. I alone was left in ignorance, through false kindness. How deeply am I indebted to dear Mr. Harford. He has acted like a true Christian friend."

As the day fixed for her quitting Barley Wood approached, the anxiety of her friends on her behalf increased. They had, however, the satisfaction to see, that acutely as she felt the trial, yet she bore it with a Christian spirit. No expressions of resentment against her base, fraudulent servants escaped her lips; she spoke of them not in anger, but in pity. "Do not exclaim against their ingratitude to *me*," she said, "it is their sinfulness against *God*, that forms the melancholy part of the case."

At length the day of her removal arrived. It was dreary and cold. Several gentlemen in the neighbourhood had come to express their sympathies, and to afford their help if required. Assisted by her kind and most devotedly attached friend, Miss Frowd, she left the room to which she had been so many years confined. "She descended the stairs," says Mr. Roberts, "with a placid countenance. She walked silently, for a few minutes, round the room, in which were hung the portraits of many of her dear friends, who had successively been removed

before her. She was then helped into the carriage, with her attached female friends. She cast one pensive, parting look upon her endeared bowers, exclaiming, as the carriage drove off, 'I am driven, like Eve, out of Paradise, but not, like Eve, by angels.'"

How deeply affecting was this event, and yet how instructing! How soon may the brightest and fairest prospect be overcast! How fleeting and unsubstantial is earthly prosperity—how suddenly is this fair flower, sought after with such intense eagerness, blighted, either by the withering effect of our own neglect, or by the wickedness of others! O piety, how essential art thou to fit us for these vicissitudes! how supporting are thy influences! how thou ennoblest thy possessor! With what magnanimity, with what tranquillity, and with what confidence, dost thou inspire the mind! Shall we not be inexcusable, if we seek thee not, when the terms on which thou mayest be found are simply, "Ask, and it shall be given you."—James i. 5.

The conduct of Mrs. More's servants merits the severest reprehension. Had they acted with common honesty, she would have had no occasion to quit her beloved retreat. But it too frequently happens that individuals raised from obscurity and want, to places of confidence, where they can gratify their senses, become the most extravagant in their habits. It must be admitted too, after making every allowance for Mrs. More's situation, that she was, in some degree, censurable. She ought to have exerted a more proper control over them. It is unwise to yield to the dictum of our domestics, or to allow them to exert their power unchecked, be they ever so well disposed. Their comfort, as well as the comfort of their superiors, is promoted by their being kept at a respectful distance. This may be done, while they are treated with all possible kindness. The confi-

dence placed in them should never be that of friendship, but of servitude. It is due to them, as well as to their superiors, that stated intervals should be appointed for the examination of their accounts. A well regulated domestic expenditure is essential to the comfort of life; without it, the most wealthy can hardly be sure that they shall not become embarrassed. Scarcely any amount of wealth can withstand the wasting effects of long-continued prodigality. Mrs. More's indisposition, and confinement to her apartments, will not exempt her from the charge of incaution for omitting to inspect occasionally her household expenditure. Her confined situation should have made her more strict in her inquiries into every item of her accounts. Such, however, was her amiable disposition, that she did not like to ask questions that would seem to imply suspicion, or be likely to give pain. She should not have forgotten, that those whose accounts will bear investigation, are never unwilling to submit to it, and that a desire for concealment, or a reluctance to submit to inquiry, are certain proofs of fraudulent intentions.

CHAPTER XXI.

Residence at Clifton—Settlement of her pecuniary affairs—Symptoms of decay—Growing fitness for her great change—Declining health—State of her mind—Lingering affliction—Death—Her funeral—Monumental inscription—Closing remarks—Intellectual powers—Value of her productions—Religious sentiments—Aim of her life—Excellence of her Character—Personal appearance—Self-denial—Patriotism—Will—Tribute to her memory.

On the 18th of April, 1828, in her eighty-third year, Mrs. More took possession of the commodious house, that had been engaged for her, in Windsor Terrace, Clifton. A removal, at that age, from a spot formed to her own taste, and where she had spent the last twenty years of her life, was a trial more severe than many could have borne. Her friends, though they had taken the precaution to engage for her an elegant house, fitted up with every convenience, in a highly respectable neighbourhood, surrounded by many of her most attached adherents, were yet apprehensive that the change, though she bore up under it nobly at the time, would afterwards have been fatal to her tranquillity, if it did not shorten her life. Happily their fears proved groundless. Mrs. More carried to her new abode the same contented and cheerful mind, which had distinguished her through life, with scarcely any diminution of her characteristic gaiety and wit.

She had so long accustomed herself to view all

affairs in a providential light, and had inculcated so frequently the duty of implicitly depending upon God in every event, however trying, that she felt, from principle as well as from habit, the strongest reasons for entire acquiescence in the Divine will. She knew, that without the permission of God, even those difficulties into which she had been brought, by the wickedness of others, could not have occurred. She was convinced, that God had the wisest and the kindest intentions in permitting it to happen, nor did she feel less confidently assured, that it would prove to her among the *all* things which were to work together for her good.

Her friends crowded around her in her new situation in greater numbers than on any former occasion. All were eager to express their continued attachment to one, for whose reverses they felt the deepest sympathy. In such numbers did they, however, at length daily arrive, that she was overcome with fatigue by their kind attentions. To afford her a little undisturbed leisure, she consented to the advice of her attendants,—to reserve two fixed days in each week to herself; and though her health was subject to frequent variations, she was cheerful and happy. "In one of her playful moments," says Mr. Roberts, "she drew up the following list of individuals who had kindly visited her at her new house; heading it, '*Sketch of my Court at Windsor Terrace*, 1828, The Duke of Gloucester, Sir Thomas Ackland, Sir Edmund Hartopp, and Mr. Harford, my *sportsmen*. Mr. Battersby, Mr. Pigott, and Mrs. Adlington, my *fruiterers*. Mrs. Walker Gray, my *confectioner*. Mr. Edward Bruce, my *fishmonger*. Dr. Carrick, my *state physician* and zealous friend. Mrs. La Touch, my *silk-mercer and clothier*. The Bishop of Salisbury, my *oculist*, the Miss Roberts's, my *counsellors not solicitors*, for they give more than

they take. The Miss Davids, my old friends and new neighbours. Messrs. Hensman and Elwin, *spiritual directors*. Mr. Wilberforce, my *guide, philosopher and friend*. Miss Frowd, my *domestic chaplain, secretary, house-apothecary, knitter, lamplighter, missionary to my numerous learned seminaries*, and without controversy *the queen of clubs*.* Mr. Huber my incomparable *translator*, who by his superiority puts the original out of countenance. Mr. Cadell, accoucheur to the muses, who has introduced many a sad sickly brat to see the light, but whispers, that they must not depend on long life."

Being now comfortably settled in her new abode, Mrs. More turned her attention to the settlement of her pecuniary affairs. She disposed of Barley Wood to William Harford, Esq.: she sold the copy-right of such of her works as she still had in her possession: she invested the amount in the funds, and she had the satisfaction to find, that it was still sufficient to enable her, with the household economy which she now determined to pursue, to support her schools, and to continue her usual charitable distributions. Writing to Mr. Wilberforce, six months after her removal, she remarks, "I cannot express the joy your most welcome letter gave me. It is delightful to think we shall meet once more on this side Jordan. I am diminishing my worldly cares. I have sold Barley Wood, and have just parted with the copy-right to Cadell of those few of my writings which I had not sold him before. I have exchanged eight pampered minions, for four sober servants. I have greatly lessened my household expenses, which enables me to maintain my schools, and to enlarge my charities. My schools alone, with clothes, rent, &c.

* Alluding to the village female clubs, which Mrs. More had established, and which Miss Frowd now superintended.

cost me two hundred and fifty pounds a year. Dear good Miss Frowd looks after them ; though we are removed much further from them. The Squire at Cheddar attends them for almost the whole of Sunday, and keeps, and sends me an accurate statement of merits and wants ; so that I still have many comforts. Having sold my carriage and horses, I want no coachman ; and having no garden, I stand in no need of a gardener. My removal hence has been providentially directed for my good. I have two pious clergymen near me, whom I call my chaplains, and who often devote an evening to exposition and prayer in my family ; uniformly on Saturdays. My most kind and skilful physician, Dr. Carrick, who used to have twelve miles to come to me, has now not much above two hundred yards. I found this a great comfort lately, when he had to visit me sometimes twice a day. By the blessing of God on his skill, I am nearly recovered, but have still to feed chiefly on drugs."

Towards the close of 1828, Mrs. More's friends perceived in her, with regret, symptoms of mental decay. Her memory became impaired, and though her remarks were frequently as strikingly interesting and appropriate as they had ever been, yet she often, without being conscious of it, repeated the same observations, and related the same anecdote to the same individuals. The perception of these infirmities induced her attendants to discountenance the visits of strangers, and to dissuade her, as much as they could, from those literary pursuits that were likely to prove exciting. These steps were doubtless taken in kindness, and they were deemed absolutely necessary to the preservation of her life, by her medical adviser; but it may be doubted whether they did not in some degree accelerate the approaching mental debility. For, as Mr. Roberts well remarks,

"the remission of intellectual labour, essential as it may be in advanced age to the support of life, not unfrequently opens an escape for the stores of memory, and accelerates the decay of mental energy. To preserve the faculties in vigour, amidst declining years is beyond our power, but to protract the date of their use and efficiency is not unfrequently the result of that perseverance in mental pursuits, which keeps them in constant, but not in excessive exercise. From an early age to a very late period of her life, Mrs. More had kept her mind, if not at the fullest, yet at a very considerable stretch, and when her last long vacation from study was entered upon, the retrograde course her mind was taking became more obvious as her years advanced."

It is, however, evident, that the chief cause of her declension in mental vigour was the declining state of her health. In early life, and in middle age, we sometimes see great mental effort associated with much bodily debility and ill-health: the mind seems, in such cases, to act as if it had no sympathy with the body. By some secret, powerful act of volition, it concentrates all its efforts, and employs them in its own operations. Instances of this kind, it must be acknowledged, are rare: we much more frequently see the finest intellectual powers rendered perfectly inactive by the effects of some bodily disease; indeed, it is seldom that mental vigour is protracted to so lengthened a period as it was in Mrs. More. That it should have declined at the age of eighty-four, especially after the trial she had recently been called to sustain, could not be matter of surprise, especially when the state of her health, as related by Dr. Carrick, her physician, is taken into consideration. "From the time," he says, "that Mrs. More removed from Barley Wood to Clifton, her health was never otherwise than in a very pre-

carious state: she seldom continued beyond a few days exempt from some attack, more or less severe."

To the blessing of God, on the assiduous care of her attendants, and on the skill of her excellent physician, her health was preserved in nearly the same state, from 1828 till nearly the close of 1832. Through the whole of this period, all who were around her could perceive a growing fitness for her great change. As her bodily strength declined, her soul seemed to ascend towards heaven with increasing vigour. The subject in which she took the most lively interest, was the extension of Christianity: the number of societies which had been established for its diffusion; the liberal manner in which they had been supported, and the success which had crowned their efforts, always formed with her a theme of delightful exultation. Her schools and her charities had a share in her attention to the latest period of her life. At an age when the common sympathies of our nature too frequently become cold, and we feel only for ourselves, her benevolence became more expansive. The diminution of her income, arising from the prodigality of those in whom she had placed confidence, might have formed a justifiable excuse for the withdrawal of her support from some of her charities, but she retrenched in another form. She curtailed her expenditure, by denying herself of her indulgences, rather than by declining any of her charitable distributions. Such will ever be the effect of Christian principles, where they are allowed to operate in their full force.

In the autumn of 1832 Mrs. More's mind received a shock, occasioned by the severe illness and death of her excellent and very highly esteemed friend, Miss Roberts, from which she appears never to have fully recovered. "About the middle of November," says

Dr. Carrick, "she suffered a slight attack of catarrh, without any assignablecause, which gradually extended to the chest. Toward the end of the month, with the employment of the usual remedies, these symptoms seemed to be giving way; but, to those who had frequent opportunities of seeing her, it was evident that her strength had been, for some time, gradually diminishing. During the night of the twenty-sixth, a considerable degree of bewilderment came on: from that time her symptoms underwent but little alteration. A slight degree of fever continued slowly to waste her strength till the close of life."

In this declining state she remained for near ten months; yet was she never heard to complain. She often expressed a desire to depart, and to be with Christ: it was not, however, an impatient or unsubmissive desire, but an eager longing after that incorruptible and glorious inheritance, which, through faith in the merits of the atonement, she had long been earnestly seeking, and the anticipation of which had sometimes filled her with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

"As she approached the termination of her life, her thoughts," says Mr. Roberts, "often seemed lost in the visions of eternity. Amidst all her wanderings, she was coherent and consistent on whatever related to the state of purity and blessedness whither she was hastening."

She was constantly in a devout and sweetly-composed frame: prayer was evidently the life of her soul; "It was," says one of her attendants, "the last thing that lived in her. Ejaculations of the Psalms, and other portions of sacred writ, she was almost continually uttering. Her memory, though much impaired as to worldly objects, served her in things spiritual most faithfully: often did she exclaim, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God! renew

within me a right spirit: cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me: let thy will be done in me and by me to thy praise and glory: I desire only to be found at the foot of the cross: have mercy on me, Lord, a miserable sinner: strengthen my resignation to thy will: I am thine, thou hast bought me with a price the most precious, even thy blood: have mercy on me and grant me an abundant entrance into thy everlasting kingdom: strengthen me in the knowledge of thyself, whom I love and honour: raise my desires, purify my affections, subdue in me every evil temper, and sanctify my soul.'"

In the lucid intervals she had during her ten months' confinement to her bed, her conversation to those around her was interesting, and the advice she gave them, solemn and impressive. She was most grateful for the kind attention they paid her, and she would often say, "I hope I am not peevish or troublesome." "It pleased God," says Dr. Carrick, "in a remarkable manner to protect her to this advanced period of life from those infirmities of temper which often render age unamiable and unhappy." Her delirium rendered the triumph of her religious principles less signal than it would otherwise have been; but when free from it she evidently experienced that joy and peace in believing which an unshaken reliance on the Redeemer's merits can alone inspire. Even in her seasons of bewilderment she often seemed to those around her to be secretly rejoicing in God."

She lingered till the end of October, 1833, in very nearly the same state. "About that time," says Dr. Carrick, "her appetite, which had hitherto been sufficient for her condition, suddenly failed, and a total rejection of nourishment led unavoidably to the termination of her lengthened struggle. For the last week she scarcely seemed to recog-

nise those about her." The closing scene is thus affectingly detailed by her faithful attendant: "On the morning of Friday, the 7th September, 1833, we offered up our accustomed morning prayers by her bed-side. She was silent, and apparently attentive. All the time her hands were devoutly lifted up. Throughout the day she underwent but little change. I sat watching her in the evening, from eight till nearly nine. Her face was smooth and glowing; there was an unusual brightness in its expression. She smiled, and endeavouring to raise herself from her pillow, reached out her arms, as if catching at something. While making this effort she once called very plainly, 'Patty,' the name of her last beloved sister, exclaiming at the same time, 'Joy!' She then sunk into the same quiet and tranquil state as before. She remained thus for about an hour, when Dr. Carrick came. At ten, the symptoms of speedy departure could not be doubted: her pulse became fainter and fainter: at twelve it became almost extinct. She looked then very serene, and there was nothing but the gentle breathing of infant sleep. She survived the night, and continued till a few minutes after one, when I saw the last gentle breath escape, and one more was added to that 'multitude which no man can number, who sing the praises of God and the Lamb for ever and ever.'"

Thus tranquilly did this venerable Christian lady and distinguished ornament of her sex, in her eighty-ninth year, finish her course. She died in the Lord, and her happy spirit was doubtless admitted to the full enjoyment of his presence in the realms of bliss. While her hope of salvation had ever been placed alone on the mercy of God through Christ, and while she was ever willing to acknowledge her entire spiritual destitution, and utter inability to perform any duty aright without Divine aid; yet resting assured that this aid would never be witheld

from those who sought it earnestly, she had with great fervency of spirit, ever blended as much persevering activity in doing the will of God as if her hope had rested solely on her works. She ever seemed to act under the just impression, that though we shall not be rewarded for our works, as if we had *merited* anything, yet that our future reward will be according to our works. It would appear, from her conduct for the last fifty years of her life, as if she had constantly before her mind the Saviour's declaration: "I must work the work of him that sent me while it is day, for the night cometh when no one can work." The talents which had been entrusted to her were of no mean order, and she had so employed them as that on the entrance of her spirit into the presence of her Judge she doubtless received the welcome plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord."

On the 13th, her remains were deposited by the side of her sister's, near Wrington church; and, agreeably to her request, the funeral was void of all pomp. As it passed through Bristol, the bells of the churches tolled. About a mile from Wrington, most of the gentlemen in the neighbourhood met the procession; and, for a considerable distance from the church, the road on each side was lined with villagers, most of them in mourning. At the entrance of the village, the solemn train was headed by a number of clergymen in their robes, and by more than two hundred children belonging to her schools. As they entered the church, which was excessively crowded, the whole scene was most affecting. At her desire, mourning was provided for fifteen old men of her own naming.

A neat monumental tablet has been erected, by public subscription, to her memory, in the new church of St. Philip, Bristol, bearing upon it the following inscription:—

Sacred
TO THE MEMORY OF
HANNAH MORE.

SHE WAS BORN IN THE PARISH OF STAPLETON, NEAR BRISTOL, A.D. 1745,
AND DIED AT CLIFTON, SEPTEMBER 7th, A.D. 1833.

ENDOWED WITH GREAT INTELLECTUAL POWERS,
AND EARLY DISTINGUISHED BY THE SUCCESS
OF HER LITERARY LABOURS,
SHE ENTERED THE WORLD UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES
TENDING TO FIX HER AFFECTIONS ON ITS VANITIES;
BUT INSTRUCTED IN THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST,
TO FORM A JUST ESTIMATE OF THE REAL END OF HUMAN EXISTENCE,
SHE CHOSE THE BETTER PART,
AND CONSECRATED HER TIME AND TALENTS
TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE GOOD OF HER FELLOW-CREATURES,
IN A LIFE OF PRACTICAL PIETY AND DIFFUSIVE BENEFICENCE.
HER NUMEROUS WRITINGS IN SUPPORT OF RELIGION AND ORDER,
AT A CRISIS WHEN BOTH WERE RUDELY ASSAILED,
WERE EQUALLY EDIFYING TO READERS OF ALL CLASSES;
AT ONCE DELIGHTING THE WISE,
AND INSTRUCTING THE IGNORANT AND SIMPLE.
IN THE EIGHTY-NINTH YEAR OF HER AGE,
BELOVED BY HER FRIENDS, AND VENERATED BY THE PUBLIC,
SHE CLOSED HER CAREER OF USEFULNESS
IN HUMBLE RELIANCE ON THE MERCIES OF GOD,
THROUGH FAITH IN THE MERITS OF HER REDEEMER.

HER MORTAL REMAINS ARE DEPOSITED IN A VAULT IN THIS CHURCH-YARD,
WHICH ALSO CONTAINS THOSE OF HER FOUR SISTERS,
who resided with her at
BARLEY WOOD, IN THIS PARISH, HER FAVOURITE ABODE, AND WHO
ACTIVELY CO-OPERATED IN HER UNWEARIED ACTS OF
CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE:
MARY MORE, DIED 18th APRIL, 1813, AGED 75 YEARS.
ELIZABETH MORE, DIED 14th JUNE, 1816, AGED 76 YEARS.
SARAH MORE, DIED 17th MAY, 1817, AGED 74 YEARS.
MARTHA MORE, DIED 14th SEPT. 1819, AGED 69 YEARS.

THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED OUT OF A SUBSCRIPTION
FOR A PUBLIC MEMORIAL TO HANNAH MORE,
of which
THE GREATER PROPORTION IS DEVOTED TO THE ERECTION OF A SCHOOL,
in the
POPULOUS AND DESTITUTE OUT-PARISH OF ST. PHILIP & JACOB, BRISTOL,
TO THE BETTER ENDOWMENT OF WHOSE DISTRICT CHURCH
SHE BEQUEATHED THE RESIDUE OF HER PROPERTY.

The observations already made in the course of this narrative, on Mrs. More's character and productions, will render any lengthened closing remarks unnecessary. In whatever light we view her, she was certainly a distinguished character. With delicate health through life, she attained nevertheless to

a very advanced age; and it was remarkable, as Dr. Carrick says, "that, to the very last, her eye was not dim: she could read with ease and without glasses the smallest print. Her hearing too was almost unimpaired; and until very near the close of life, her features were not shrunk, nor wrinkled, nor uncomely, so that to a considerable degree her person retained the same appearance as at an earlier period. Even to the last, her death-bed was attended with few of the pains and infirmities which are almost inseparable from sinking nature."

A candid perusal of Mrs. More's productions would lead to a conviction that the leading characteristics of her mind were, her capability to perceive the chief practical points of any subject, to fix upon them when they were perceived, and to bring them forth to view, generally in a manner the most striking; often, indeed, with great beauty of illustration. If she was never profound she was seldom obscure. That she did not pursue further the subjects she discussed, was owing probably less to want of ability than to a want of inclination. For curious and critical enquiries, interesting only to the learned, but of little or no real importance, she had no taste. The sobriety of her mind led her to make the common topics in which all mankind have an equal interest, the subjects of her inquiry, and to bring them to bear on the every-day duties of life.

Mr. Roberts states, that she had to work in the face of forbidding circumstances, such as, in ordinary cases, repress vigour and slacken perseverance. If so, it must have been in her commencing efforts for the press. It can hardly be said that she had to struggle with those difficulties which many deserving aspirants after literary distinction have had to experience. From the publication of her 'Percy,' if not from an earlier period, to the close of her life, her literary success was most encouraging.

The amount she derived from the sale of her works, was an ample remuneration, had this been her sole object. The extent of her literary reputation was in the highest degree encouraging, and the good done by her works must have been powerful incentives to continued exertion. Providence seemed to have opened the way for her advancement with little difficulty. Few have the happiness to enjoy the patronage of a Garrick, a Johnson, a Reynolds, or a Porteus, at the commencement of their career. It can hardly, then, be said, that she had to labour in the face of forbidding circumstances.

It ought, however, to be added, as it may most truly, that she made the best use of her advantages, and employed them less for her own interest than for the benefit of others. She promptly seized the happy incidents which offered to her, and never failed, by diligent, persevering endeavours, to make them the means of promoting the public good.

Mrs. More's productions were eminently fitted for the age in which she lived; were more adapted to the general reader than to the student; more distinguished for their frequent striking illustration of common-place statements than for their originality; and more consolatory than awakening. Her style, generally, was loose and declamatory, rather than concise and pointed, more fitted for the orator than for the writer. She composed too hastily to make her compositions faultless; but there is a charm in her writings which never fails to interest general readers. Her powers of illustration were most extensive. To the most common-place subjects she could impart the freshness of novelty. "Again and again," says Mr. Roberts, "she recurred to the same subject, and still varying the dress of her thought, where the thought was repeated, she cheated the light-minded into reading her again and again."

A modern critic has well remarked, that "Mrs. More was one of those efficient moral instructors, who laboured successfully to make the present generation wiser and better than the past. Her influence, as a reformer of the manners and of the education of the great was considerable; while she gave a powerful impulse to the exertions since made to instruct the lower classes. She enjoyed, during life, a brilliant reputation, and an ample measure of homage from the public. If her usefulness was not equal to her wishes, yet she ever humbly acknowledged it to be more than commensurate with her exertions. Her memory will always be loved and honoured, though she belonged more to the day in which she lived. The great merit of her writings consisted in their adaptation to the transitive state of society, during which she reigned as an authority; and she comes under the class of authors who are in danger of not being duly appreciated, in consequence of that very advancement which they contributed to produce."

We cannot concur in the following remark of the same critic, "that Mrs. More became, as an author, posthumous to the present age, long before she quitted life; and that her writings, except that all good seed is reproductive, have produced nearly the full amount of good they are adapted to effect." It may be the case with her earlier productions, and will be so, more or less, with those of every author; but her later works will be read for a long period to come with interest, by that numerous class to whom, at their first appearance, they were more especially adapted. A neat cabinet edition of her works would, we are persuaded, be well received by the public at the present time.

Mrs. More's religious sentiments were eminently such as might be truly termed scriptural. Mr. Roberts says, "She was too pious to be a pro-

fessed theologian;" as if deep piety, and profound theology were irreconcileable. Had he said, she was too pious to be a theological polemic, nothing could have been more just. He might then have added, with more force, that to make a right application of religious truth, to bring it home to the conscience, and to conform our conduct to its precepts, were, in her opinion, the blessings chiefly designed to be conveyed to us by Divine revelation; and that the awful import of its message being once understood and felt, ought, instead of leading to curious critical inquiries, much less to angry disputation, to excite us seriously to inquire how we can best respond to its invitations, and obey its precepts.

Her religious sentiments, it must be acknowledged, never appear to have been so decidedly formed, as that she could be said to have embraced cordially either the Calvinistic or the Arminian creeds. On those nice points of dispute, which form the dividing line between these systems, which are really of so little essential importance that they ought perhaps on no occasion to be made matters of contention, much less of strife and division, her views were never fixed. From some remarks in her correspondence, she seems to have had almost an aversion to Calvinism; yet the writers she chiefly prized, were divines of that class, and the phraseology she often uses in her productions, would lead to the conclusion, that she had embraced the views held by the modern advocates of that system, which differ materially, though not essentially, from the views of its ultra supporters. In one of Mr. Newton's letters to her, he thus replies to some remarks she appears to have made on her creed: "I give you full credit for being no enemy to the Calvinists, and really believe you are one yourself, though you are not aware of it. There are schemes of Calvinism which you disap-

prove of, and so do I. If the world so pleased, I had rather be called a Peterist, or a Paulist, than a Calvinist."

Few writers who have taken the middle course between these systems, have been so successful in escaping the censure of both parties as was Mrs. More. Unhappily a disposition has always too much prevailed in both classes, to despise and often to attack those who, from the purest intentions and the most amiable motives, have hesitated on which side to rank themselves. Charges of insincerity and hypocrisy have been brought against them with merciless severity; as if the subjects in dispute were so clear as not to admit of hesitation, or as if the dividing lines were so accurately marked as to make it certain, that if a person embraced neither he must be a hypocrite. How earnestly is the period to be wished for, when this systematic intolerance shall for ever cease to exist!

Mrs. More was always firmly attached to the Church of England, but her attachment was not that of a mere partizan or a bigot. She had calmly considered the subject, divesting herself, as much as she could, of her early associations and habits; and the results were, that, for reasons justifiable to herself, she preferred it to any other Christian community: she thought it not right, however, to be restrained within its rules as to the matter of personal exertion. The benefits she had derived from Christian instruction made her anxious to convey, by some means, the light of truth to others; and it is evident, from the meetings she encouraged to effect this purpose, in connexion with her schools—which some members of the church censured as irregular—that she wished a class of teachers subordinate to the regular clergy, and qualified chiefly to instruct the lower classes, to be regularly established. That she

would have rejoiced in the recently formed Pastoral Aid Society, as one well calculated to advance the progress of true piety among a numerous, but too much neglected class, and have ranked herself among its most liberal and active supporters, there cannot be a doubt: any institution, in fact, formed to promote the extension of religion was sure of her patronage, and more especially so, one formed on the principles of that church with which she identified herself.

The sole aim of Mrs. More for the last half century of her life, was the extension of Christian knowledge. From the death of Garrick till she ceased to breathe, this was the leading object of her pursuits: she never lost sight of it in any of her works: in her political tracts, it forms a principal feature. "Compare her tracts," says a judicious friend, "with Harriet Martineau's ingenious, but ineffective compositions; the former comes home to the hearts of the poor, the latter scarcely reaches them at all. It is Christianity that can alone stoop to the low and the wretched: this it often does, as it were, from the third heaven, and to this elevation the mind of the philanthropist must also be caught up, before he is able so to stoop, in humble imitation of the Son of God, who left his throne in the highest heavens, to preach good things to the poor."

It was ever her most diligent endeavour to promote the extension of practical Christian piety; not the mere knowledge of its theory, but the regular, conscientious discharge of its duties. Rightly viewing the Christian system as essentially practical, she exposed the absurdity of pretensions to inward holiness where there was outward moral inconsistency: yet the morality she inculcated was based on its purest principles; being, in fact, when car-

ried out into the life, neither more nor less than faith working by love, or that holiness which constitutes Christian sanctification, and is the product of the Divine Spirit upon the heart.

From her youth to her advanced age she was, indeed, the delight of all who knew her. She had a perfect knowledge of the world, yet she never conducted herself on principles of mere worldly policy, but on those of Christian sympathy. Her piety, though strict, was scriptural and amiable, diffusing over her countenance, and through her temper, a benevolence infinitely superior to the studied kindness of worldly politeness. She looked upon all that the world calls important with a playful, good-humoured kind of contempt; and would often expose the folly of vice, in a way that was likely to improve without giving offence. While she never failed to denounce sin with great severity, she ever flew, as on the wings of mercy, to the rescue of the vicious. Her greatest delight was to do good: nothing occasioned her so much anxiety, as the means by which she might best promote the good of mankind and the interests of Christianity.

Mrs. More's personal appearance was always interesting, and when engaged in conversation on some pleasing subject, it was often in the highest degree animating. Her dress was neat and plain, neither expensive nor singular. She wore no jewels. "Her manners," says Mr. Roberts, "were unostentatious; and in company she had the art of saying much, without seeming to engross a larger share of the conversation than others. She took great pleasure in drawing forth the capabilities of retiring merit. She was a person to live with, to converse with, and to pray with. Her genius was great but lovely, inviting a near approach, and inspiring the most timid with confidence and ease. Her wit was

entirely subordinate to her good nature; and never so employed as to inflict pain."

She was perhaps a little too eager to know what the world thought of her productions, and on some occasions she seemed too fond of applause; yet she was never vain, haughty, or overbearing, nor did she often complain of those who freely criticised her productions; she rather regarded them as friends, and always paid the greatest attention to their remarks. Even towards those who treated her with unmerited severity, she harboured no resentment. She could not, nor did she affect to be ignorant of her own talents; yet she never overrated them, nor assumed any superiority over those who were less gifted. She had always the most humble views of her own performance.

Christianity had taught her the importance of self-denial, and she carefully cultivated it on all occasions. None could excel her in self-control. She acted throughout life, towards persons of all classes, most considerately. She seems, indeed, always to have enquired into what was likely to be the result of her actions before she performed them. In her daily intercourse with her inferiors, she was careful to avoid giving needless trouble or inconvenience. Perhaps she carried this amiable feeling too far—for it has its limits. Servants when too much indulged become indolent, if not extravagant, insolent, and overbearing.

Mrs. More may justly be said to have been a truly English lady. She greatly admired the British constitution. Her manners and her taste were English. The introduction of French principles or fashions she exceedingly disliked. But her claim to the veneration of posterity rests on her Christian philanthropy: every institution formed for the benefit of mankind, was sure to find in her a firm friend'

while cases of personal distress she cheerfully and promptly relieved. The sums she expended during her life were great, and she retained the same liberal disposition to the close of her life. She bequeathed, by will, the following princely sums :—

To the Bristol Infirmary	£.1,000	0	0
,, Anti-Slavery Society	500	0	0
,, London Pious Clergy	500	0	0
,, London Clerical Education Society	100	0	0
,, Moravian Missionary Society	200	0	0
,, Welsh College	400	0	0
,, Bristol Clerical Education Society	100	0	0
,, Hibernian Society	200	0	0
,, Reformation Society	200	0	0
,, Religious Tract Society	150	0	0
,, Irish Scripture Reading Society	150	0	0
,, Burmese Mission	200	0	0
,, Society for the Conversion of the Jews	200	0	0
,, Society for Printing the Scriptures at Serampoore	100	0	0
,, Baptist Missionary Society	100	0	0
,, London Seaman's Bible Society	100	0	0
,, Liverpool Seaman's Bible Society	100	0	0
,, London Missionary Society	100	0	0
,, Society for Printing the Hebrew Scriptures	100	0	0
,, British and Foreign Bible Society	1,000	0	0
,, Church Missionary Society	1,000	0	0
,, Society for Educating Clergymen's Daughters	200	0	0
,, Diocese of Ohio	200	0	0
,, Trustees of the New Church at Mangotsfield	150	0	0
,, Bristol Stranger's Friend Society	100	0	0
,, Bristol Society for the Relief of Small Debtors	100	0	0
,, Bristol Penitentiary	100	0	0
,, Bristol Orphan Society	100	0	0
,, Bristol Philosophical Institution	100	0	0
,, London Stranger's Friend Society	100	0	0
,, Commissioners of Foreign Missions in America, towards the School at Ceylon, called 'Barley Wood'	100	0	0
,, Newfoundland School Society	100	0	0
,, Society for the Distressed Vaudoise	100	0	0
,, Clifton Dispensary	100	0	0
,, Bristol District for Visiting the Poor	100	0	0
,, Irish Society	100	0	0
,, Sailors' Home Society	100	0	0
,, Christian Knowledge Society	50	0	0
,, Bristol Misericordia Society	50	0	0
,, Bristol Samaritan Society	50	0	0
,, Bristol Temple Infant School	50	0	0
,, Prayer-Book and Homily Society	50	0	0
,, London Lock Hospital	50	0	0
,, London Refuge for the Destitute	50	0	0
,, Gaelic School	50	0	0
,, Society for Female Schools in India	50	0	0
,, Keynsham School	50	0	0

	£.	s.	d.
To the Cheddar School	50	0	0
,, For Books for Ohio	50	0	0
,, Bristol and Clifton Female Anti-Slavery Society	50	0	0
,, Clifton Lying-in Charity	50	0	0
,, Clifton Infant School	50	0	0
,, Clifton National School	50	0	0
,, Clifton Female Hibernian Society	50	0	0
,, Temple Poor	50	0	0
,, For Pews in the Temple Church	50	0	0
,, Bristol Harmonica	20	0	0
,, Edinburgh Sabbath Schools	20	0	0
,, Shipham Female Club	50	0	0
,, Cheddar Female Club	20	0	0
,, Poor Printers' Fund	20	0	0
,, For Shipham Poor	50	0	0
,, Minister of Wrington, for distribution among the Poor	20	0	0
,, Minister of Cheddar, for distribution among the Poor	20	0	0
,, Minister of Nailsea, for the Poor	5	0	0
,, The Kildare School Society, Dublin	300	0	0
	£.9,675	0	0

In addition to the above munificent legacies, she left to each of her old pensioners at Wrington £1, and bequeathed the whole of her residuary estate, amounting to a considerable sum, to the new church in the out-parish of St. Philip, in Bristol.

These princely bequests were the offerings of Christian gratitude, made neither to atone for past illiberality, nor in the expectation of receiving any thing for them in the shape of merit, but from ardent love to that Redeemer who died for us, that we should not live unto ourselves, but to him that died and rose again.

We shall only add the following tribute to the memory of this eminently pious and gifted lady, from the pen of one of her literary friends, as cited by a modern critic: "Hannah More passed through the severest ordeal to which talents and virtue can be submitted; and it is only justice to say, that her character, progressively purified, has come out of the flames lighted up by the sparks of her own kindling. This is the sincere testimony of one who was, from

too little acquaintance with her works, a prejudiced, rather than a partial reader of her productions at the beginning, but who has, by their perusal, been led to confess his fault and to abjure it." "Of her," as the critic remarks, "we may almost venture to say, Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

THE END.

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